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Calcutta University Magazine.

Vol. XIX, Nos. 2 & 3.

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THOUGHTS AND OBSERVATIONS.

Whatever one might say, the genius of literature is always a little aristocratic. Except in the case of a few latter-day writers, the spirit of democratic art has never consciously entered the stately temple of literature. The great Elizabethan poets and dramatists were always ready with a scoff and a sneer when they spoke of the masses. Neither Greek art, nor Mediæval, Italian, or French periods of art-revival took a direct hold on the masses, and incorporated them in their characteristic productions. "Literature, strictly considered," says Whitman, the only man who consciously strove to write democratic poetry, "has never recognised the People, and, whatever may be said, does not to-day." Again, "the great poems—Shakespeare included—are poisonous to the idea of the pride and dignity of the common people, the life-blood of Democracy. The models of our literature, as we get it from other lands, ultramarine, have had their birth in courts, and basked and grown in castle sunshine; all smells of princes' favours. . . . I say I have not seen a single writer, artist, lecturer, or what not, that has confronted the voiceless, but ever erect and active, pervading, underlying will and typic aspiration of the land, in a spirit kindred to itself."

* * *

Whitman, of course, runs a little into the superlative. But in the main his contention, so far as it refers to the writers previous to the 19th century, is true. In the nineteenth century, we have the great Russian novelists, Tolstoi, Turgeneff and Dostoieffsky, and the English novelties, George Eliot and Thomas Hardy, the French Pierre Loti and George Sand, who are distinctly democratic. In art, democracy has

has found its greatest painter in Millet, "so profound in feeling, so dumbly eloquent, so tragic." Then in poetry, in England, we have Blake, Crabbe, Wordsworth and Shelley : but each of these has his limitations. Blake is too visionary and fragmentary, Crabbe is too grim and pathetic to rise to the "democratic exultation," Wordsworth is too aloof and unbending, too obviously moral and obtrusive, and Shelley too often seems to be fighting against injustice and tyranny rather than feeling with the concrete mass of humanity : he appears too abstract and far-off, an angel singing over the clouds of a distant humanity. Only Burns among the British poets appears truly to have written *as* a peasant, as one of the people themselves ; just as only Carlyle among the English prose-writers can speak of the rugged dalesman and the toiling peasant as his own brother. But Burns was really a peasant-poet, the son of a Scotch farmer, while Carlyle was the son of a stone-mason. English literature has always been, and still continues to be, essentially aristocratic. In painting, the Dutch school and the school of Hogarth, as well as the French realists, need not detain us. The Dutch painters have not the spiritual poetry in them that we expect from democratic art. Hogarth and his school are satirists, not artists : they have no higher ideal than the exposition of social vices and the humorous element in such vices. They can be called democratic only so far as they work with the people as their material : but we cannot get the true note of democratic art from them. The French realists daub in squalor and revel in dirt not because they find them among the people, but because they want to kiss their hands to their God, the Dagon of a false realism. . . .

Yet, what is this democratic art which we have been so long considering ? It is the product of that spirit which looks up, and not down, on the silent, working masses of humanity, on the common labourer, the peasant, the mechanic, the mason and the factory-worker, and recognises in their lives the voice of a larger and nearer humanity than has appeared to us through all poems and literature ; which sees and unmask God in the meanest creatures and objects, 'manifests the immanence of the divine in nature and man' ; which places before itself as its object the interpretation of humanity—the whole of humanity, not a mere part—to itself, the perception and the expression of the beauty, dignity and

sanctity of human life in all its phases, and does not at the same time fail to recognise the beauty in particular crafts and occupations—the concrete loveliness of an actual world. Let the poet of Democracy speak for himself :

“ Painters have painted their swarming groups, and the centre figure of all ;
 From the head of the centre figure spreading a nimbus of gold-coloured light ;
 But I paint myriads of heads, but paint no head without its nimbus of gold-coloured
 light ;
 From my hand, from the brain of every man and woman it streams, effulgently
 flowing for ever.”

Democratic art does not deal in extracts and tabloids of beauty, culled from flowers and moonlights, from kings and heroes and lovers, but it is as broad and homely, and withal as beautiful and spiritual, as Nature herself, the simple, naked Nature with all her lights and shadows, her deeps and uplands, her miracles and commonplaces. How shall we judge the following passage, which none but this democratic art might have produced, and—as a critic has said—“ the grotesqueness of which is calculated to arouse intelligence ” :

“ Three scythes at harvest whizzing in a row from three lusty angels with shirts
 bagged out at their waists ;
 The snag-toothed hostler, with red hair, redeeming past sins and to come,
 Selling all he possesses, travelling on foot to fee lawyers for his brother, and sit by
 him while he is tried for forgery.”

The critic quoted above says : “ The resplendent manhood of Michael, Gabriel, Rephael, ‘ starred from Jehovah’s gorgeous armouries,’ is of like quality with that of the three reapers This piercing through gauds and trimmings, this unmasking and unbarring of appearances, this recognition of divinity in all things, is the secret of Democratic Art Not to make Christ less, but to make him the chief of a multitude, the type and symbol of triumphant heroism, do we think of the thousands who have died on battle-fields, in torture-chambers, at the stake, from lingering misery, as expiators and redeemers, in whom the lamp of the divine spirit shines clearly for those who have the eyes to see.”

In one sense, in spite of the distinctly democratic writings of this age, it may be said that the genius of literature is less democratic now than ever. To-day the writing class have been more completely sundered

from the common people than they have ever been. In former ages, there have been almost always some bonds of union, some unconscious *rapprochement*, between the arts and the people among whom they worked. Poets of former times really gave some sort of voice to the hearts of the people, and literature expressed, as well as it could, all that the people held noblest and sincerest among themselves. But to-day, though the ideals of the literary class have broadened and widened, and grown more cosmopolitan, they have lost their hold on the masses, the dumb and silently-working people who are to-day more active, more alive, more teeming with distinct personalities and strong aspirations, than they have ever been. The gap is wider to-day than ever in the past.

* * *

Democratic art is an attempt to bridge over this ever-widening gulf between the brain and the hands of the age. This wide division of course means a large and a robust humanity in the making, but this embryonic humanity can never come into life unless this sundered channel of life be again reunited into one. Either a democratic art must come into existence, or it is destined to prove "the most tremendous failure of time." *

K.

MARTYRDOM.

The world is ever slow to appreciate a new truth. What reveals itself to the individual is to be learnt with hard labour and diligence by the community at large. But the revealed truth is not always an agreeable truth. We live in darkness, it comes over us as a flash of light ;—what owl has ever hailed the rising sun in the morning sky, however glorious it might be? We shake our head and turn our face away from the truth ; we say, "No, we cannot change our old things, we have got accustomed to them. Ye, harbinger of New Light, be off. We will live, move, and have our being in darkness." But the light comes not to obey but to command. And we in our madness deny the light, fall out with it, and try to extinguish it by the fury of our breath, as if it could ever be extinguished.

* These random reflections have mostly been suggested by J. A. Symonds's essay on "Democratic Art", and a few passages are directly taken from the essay.

Many a torch-bearer of this new light have died on the scaffold. Yea, we have drowned so many of them in the deep, burnt so many of them in fire. And to what effect? The light in their hands has become all the more bright; a few dying words of their mouth have become the proud inheritance of all mankind. *Woe to the nation who happens to misjudge her prophets; woe to the people who discards the new light, and runs after the mirage. But for this ignorance, Humanity would have advanced more than it has done to-day.

History teaches us a great lesson. It spreads before us the concrete manifestation of one progressive law of the Universe. It says, "See God in Man:" because Man, either individually or collectively, is the interpreter of this law. And what can be higher and nobler in the activities of man, than these acts of martyrdom? What can better manifest God's finger before grovelling mankind than these immortal deaths of the martyrs? What can more successfully 'elevate the race at once' from the slough of bigotry and superstition, than a few dazzling instances of martyrs amidst the whole panorama of history? It has been rightly said, that if you want to build the church, you must take the martyr's blood for your cement. What caution and deliberation cannot do in a century, faith does in a moment; what thinkers and diplomatists are puzzled to work out, is done miraculously by the martyr's death and suffering.

The world thus owes a homage to all who have bled for it; who have showered blessings upon mankind, when vice prevailed and virtue subsided. It would be committing a sin, therefore, if in our ungrateful memory we forget those, who are rather too alive to our misery. Let the world bow down its head before all these saviours of mankind;—because the martyrs come to save and fulfil, and not to destroy. They can never be the subjects of amateur-like study only, they should be the objects of our devout worship. It is an idle remark, not even warranted by the facts of history, that the martyrs are to be admired, and not to be followed. They rule like planets the destiny of men. They burst forth before our beclouded vision, emblazoned with the glory of a celestial light, when we seem to grope in a midnight darkness. We are not yet over-rich in martyrs and heroes; to treat them with indifference is a luxury, which we can hardly afford at this stage of human civilization. Ah! dead must be the heart, which can think of

those, who died for others, without a glow of emotion. The Nation or Humanity, must kneel at the sacred altar where the martyrs bled, before it can once more rise renovated and ennobled, and thus to usher in new hopes and joys for the future Man.

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Calcutta, 24th Jany., 1910.

THE LAND OF THE MIZRAÏM.

Of all the countries in the world, Egypt has exercised the greatest fascination on mankind. There is scarcely a land of which we know less, and of which we want to know more. An air of mystery hovers round everything connected with this country. Here we meet with a strange people, having remarkable resemblance with the negroes, but far superior to them in intellectual power and enterprise. No one knows where they came from, and the imagination of archæologists has spun out the most ingenious theories of their origin. Here bloomed a most wonderful civilisation at the very dawn of history, of which we catch but vague and distant glimpses, but the curious details of which are shrouded in obscurity. A rich and extensive literature flourished in this land written in a strange language and in a strange and beautiful character. But it has perished so entirely that only a few snatches of popular songs have found their way to us through the tombs. Then there arose the pyramids, those huge structures of stone that have defied the ravages of Time and preserved their inestimable treasure of the bodies of the deceased Pharaohs, and "from the tops of which forty centuries look down" upon the curious traveller who dares to violate their sanctity. What a number of theories, possible and impossible, have these pyramids given birth to! Sometimes they are the treasuries of the Pharaohs in which were treasured their immense fortunes safe from the prying gaze of the robber and the plunderer. Sometimes they are the royal observatories from which the Egyptians made their wonderful observations of the stars and planets. And above all sits the Great Sphinx

with his negro face and stony stare, keeping watch, as it were, over the ancient land whose misfortunes he wails in a voiceless woe. Ah ! the mystery and enigma of that long, wistful gaze ! who can solve it ?

A thousand monuments of Egypt's, departed glory,—her tall obelisks and grand palaces, her massive pyramids and mysterious Sphinx—loom from behind the gathering gloom of centuries and make us involuntarily ask, who were these wonderful people, how could they hold up the torch of civilisation when the whole world was buried in barbarous ignorance, what account have they left us of themselves ?

None, whatever. There is scarcely a nation which did so many wonderful things and cared so little to perpetuate their memory. Statues and bas-reliefs there are, but for the most part they are such that one king has as much claim to them as another.

The only lights that have been thrown on the obscurity of Egypt's ancient history have been from Greek sources. The summary of Manetho's work and the traditions handed down by the priests of Memphis as preserved in Herodotus are our earliest authorities for this dark period. The Royal Turin Papyrus has confirmed many of Manetho's statements, while others are thrown into inextricable confusion by the most unexpected contradictions. The excavations carried on by Europeans on the basis of these documents (and among them Mr. Petrie's name stands highest) have unearthed a mass of facts that have helped us to frame a thin, meagre outline of Egyptian history. But many gaps still remain to be filled up and in the melancholy procession of Egypt's deceased Pharaohs we often meet with phantoms looming large in the surrounding obscurity, whose outlines are still to be marked bold and prominent and who are still to be invested with life and vivacity.

The conquests of Usurtasen III, and Amenhotep III, the great engineering achievements of Khufu (Cheops), Khafra and Amenhotep III float in a misty haze as much as the history of the mysterious Hyksos and the tower at Meydoun (erroneously called a pyramid). We find unknown and barbarous nations attacking Egypt on the north-west and suffering disastrous defeats, we find the central seat of power constantly shifting from Tanis to Memphis and from Memphis to Thebes, we find Assyria and Ethiopia struggling over the corpse of Egyptian greatness, and suddenly the carcase comes to life again and astonishes the world

with her vigor and prowess. But clouds come over Egypt's fortune and we find gloomy days succeeding the sunny time of her prosperity.

What a burning curiosity does this wonderful people excite and what a sad disappointment meets us as we turn our wistful gaze to her history! A curious mixture of refinement and barbarity constituted their character, a minute observation of nature and a deplorable lack of imaginative abstraction constituted their religion. They attained a high degree of mechanical and engineering skill, but they wasted it in pyramids and obelisks, while useful works, (except perhaps the great hall of Seti I) received but a scanty share of their attention. They attained marvellous accuracy and clearness in their hieroglyphics, and even represented syllables by symbols, but they made a sad halt there and never came to letters.

Thus with a thirsty mind we turn to Egyptain history, we learn curious facts, meet with startling ideas, are astonished at unexpected revelations, wonder succeeds wonder in this strange land and amongst this strange people, but the land of the Mizraïm remains wrapped up in her own mystery as ever (possibly more so) like her gigantic pyramids and colossal statues, sleeping under the sleepless gaze of the enigmatical monster of granite—the Great Sphinx.

SUBODH C. MUKERJEE, B.A.

LIKES AND DISLIKES.

It is one thing to like a person, and another thing to be able, as Desdemona says, "to live with him." There are plenty of people I can like, but hardly one or two with whom I can live for twenty-four hours without a hitch or friction. Again it is often the case that the man I can live with, with relish and satisfaction, has not, perhaps, many extraordinary claims to my liking. He may be, for all I know, a plain, sane man, with no unwholesomeness or obtuseness about him. In one sense it is possible for me to say, with the reputed author of the *Religio Medici*, that "I am of a constitution so general, that it consorts and sympathiseth with all things." *Theoretically*, I have no specific antipathy against any class or type of people. I can hear of the most dreadful criminals, the most diabolical murderers, the most shocking anthropophagi, without the least shudder or flesh-creeping. Indeed, I believe I have always read of suicides, ruffians and torturers with a decided exhilaration of the heart, and a

strange (not to say wicked) kind of buoyant pleasure. I can persuade myself to like, and even love, my greatest enemies, and the creatures most hateful or repugnant to the imagination of men. I have always risen with a new and added strength everytime I have glanced through the criminal columns of newspapers, or have heard a tale told that has cast its odour of repugnance in every nostril but my own.

The gentle and refined reader will no doubt wonder at these eccentricities of my likings and sympathies, but I must not refrain from showing him the other side of the picture. Though *theoretically* I am blest with so exceptionally "general" a constitution, as Sir Thomas Browne would say, yet *organically*, I am quite a different character altogether. There the clear and steady Platonic firmament changes into one full of broken clouds and shadows, here dazzling with the intensity of light, and there merging into a dim and dusky chiaroscuro: full of an irrational formlessness and disproportion, which has itself a strange repulsion and a weird attraction for me as I sit musing on my own self. Shaped and nurtured by circumstances over which I have no control, as Mr. Micawber would say, my 'organic filaments' have been converted into "a bundle of prejudices—made up of likings and dislikings—the veriest thrall to sympathies, apathies, antipathies." The judicious reader will see.

Unlike Charles Lamb, who has written an essay on "Imperfect Sympathies" somewhat like what this essay is going to be, I have no prejudice against strangers. People from "straunge strondes" and "ferne londes," as Chaucer would say, bring to me an air of mystery and fascination, an aroma of the wondrous and the new and unknown—peradventure the rugged romance of

Antres vast, and deserts idle,
Rough quarries, rocks and hills whose heads touch heaven —

or perchance

Sabeau odours from the spicy shore
Of Arabie the blest.

I have frequented the Jewish quarters of the city, and have looked with a strange wonder on the venerable and impenetrable visages of the children of Israel. I have pictured them congregated in their synagogues, their old Jewish fire slumbering within them, reading out their uncouth characters, singing their old psalms with their time-honoured intonations, and then, I have peered in imagination into their acute and characteristic faces at the 'Change—the piercing eyes, the sharp, Judaic expression. "Gain, and the pursuit of gain," says Lamb, "sharpens a man's visage."—I have been in a congregation of Parsis,—I being the only outsider amongst them—and beheld with a sense of awe and mystery the solemn group of the tribe of Zoroaster, the relics of a long-

drawn and prehistoric antiquity—and thought of their mystic worship of the rising Sun, their religion of Ahura-mazda and Ahriman, dual Powers, their Tower of Silence, sublime with almost an Egyptian sanctity and lonesome mysteriousness.—I have been in Buddhist places of worship, peered into Chinese messes and Japanese hotels, and gazed at the mummy in the Museum for a dream-while with a sacred wonder and almost an antiquarian veneration . . . From boyhood, I have been a lover of geography and books of travel, and have often reflected with a pleasant self-complacence on the fact that while to most other people geography is a dryas dust catalogue of the names of places, to me the pages of descriptive geography are the *open sesame* to a Paradise of an exquisite roving pleasure and undreamt-of treasures.* * *

I have always instinctively shrunk away from contact with people who regard themselves as of a poetic and romantic turn of mind. But the fact is, that I am continually reading all fashions of poetry and romantic literature. On the other hand, though I am always sure of a headache within half an hour of beginning to read any scientific book, I prefer the company of somebody with a decisively scientific turn of mind to one furnished with a poetically-languishing temperament, and soft, mellow, dreamily-romantic eyes. Shall I say that the fact amounts to this, that though moonlight is a pleasant and poetical affair, yet it is not enjoyable to meet with a person with plenty of moonshine in him ; or that I regard the company of romantic natures as carrying the coals of moonshine (could Milton be bolder in his image ?) to the Newcastle of my idealistic temperament ? Whatever may be the reason, I should not omit to say that I have too often failed to find something from those who dabble in poetic lore which comes to *me* when I read genuine poetry, and which I can only make myself awkward in trying to express. Such people are too pronounced in their opinions, while I am held suspended a floating mist of suggestions and half intuitions, wonder and mute reverence, a subtle and indescribable fascination, which words only mar and veil with an air of coarseness and cheapness. I hold it brutal to *explain* poetry, more brutal than to elucidate a jest, and the acme of monstrosity and the sign of the absence of the finer sensibilities to think that the essence of poetic enjoyment can be communicated to a person who cannot get it at first sight. You may thrust him to a higher and higher appreciation, but he will never come to the precise point to which you have arrived. Such is also the case with every other fine art, for example music and painting. You must have an individual standpoint of enjoyment and appreciation, you must feel that you have a distinct point of affection of your own between yourself and an object of art,—otherwise your enjoyment and appreciation will both be incomplete and

unsatisfactory. It is this sense that creates originality and radicalism, and often eccentricity, more than any material reason of biology and physiology.

I am never well-at-ease with brilliant people, sparkling conversationalists, and other folk of the same kidney. In society their flaring conversations are too much for me, with their alternating phases of tension and relaxation, like the current from a Ruhmkorff's coil, crackling and rattling away like some dazzling display of pyrotechnics. Perhaps this shows in what a dismal and pathetic solitude such people hold themselves, for we can never be thoroughly at home with totally solitary people. And I think this is the reason why professed wits and popular humorous people are at heart so melancholy and lonely, with such a pathetic beam of genuine *weltschmerz* peeping through their eyes when the mask is off their faces. Yet every company has need of these people; for without them conversation would subside into a perfectly plain Quakerian talk, and awkward, tame and insipid remarks, and all the bright conviviality and the brisk sparkler and glitter of the shock of intellects and temperaments would be levelled down into a dull and flat company floundering through a boundless morass of watery trivialities, eternal common-places and dreary business talks. So such flashing people have an ample *raison d'être*. On the other hand, there are people who draw in their horns in every big company, and are only enjoyable when you find them alone, or perhaps with a third person *en rapport* with yourself and this second person. These have no Macaulayan brilliance or Sheridanic fascination about them, but are something of dreamers and mystics, who absorb more than they give out, individualists of the first water, who hold with Thoreau that "no exertion of the legs can bring two minds much nearer to one another," born and perhaps unconscious idealists, who are neither worldly or practical people nor weak sentimentalists or your 'soulish' people—I mean the deliberate idealists—who would hear and speak nothing but dissertations and arguments on the soul and metaphysical things in general. I would like to have a talk, or even a few words, with the half-cynical character who could utter so boldly from his solitude, "We meet with but few men, but a great many coats and breeches;" or to sit even in silence with the high-souled mystic who could write with such majestic daring and superb effrontery :

"I am the owner of the sphere,
Of the seven stars and the solar year,
Of Cæsar's hand, and Plato's brain,
Of Lord Christ's heart, and Shakespeare's strain ;"

or to merely have a look at the exalted soul who was so saturated with the sanctity and divinity of every life and action that "he thought it an honour to wash his own face"

My particular aversions are lawyers, dogmatists, the *literal* people, the calculators, the anatomisers, pessimists, public men, authors, connoisseurs, academicians and philologists. Lawyers, I believe all but lawyers would agree, are the pest of the society, with their eternal talk of cases and judgments—such talks ought to be confined solely to the Bar Libraries, being a public nuisance outside them—their queer legal cast of the face, their absurd habiliments (“which is absurd” Euclid would be sure to cry out if he were to see this queerly-apparelled race)—their ridiculous gait and their funny gravity: to me they are so many walking tomes of ‘Jurisprudence’ or ‘Digest of Cases’ rather than living human beings. As to the dogmatists, Charles Lamb’s accusations against the Scotchman will speak against them for ever. Dogmatists pride themselves on their clear vision and pronounced principles. I have no objection to *that*, but when they go on dilating on their superiority and the immeasurable inferiority of the rest of mankind (this being one of their pet dogmas), I would fain cry out, in Scriptural language, “Who hath sent these wild asses free? Who hath loosed the bonds of these wild asses?” . . . There is one class of clear visioned people I can like, the genuinely clear-sighted, of whom perhaps Bacon may stand as the example. Bacon has that combination of mental perspicuity, plenty of “dry light,” with a width of grasp, a wholesome poetry and sanity, and a natural, philosophic serenity, which places him far above this vociferating tribe ever trumpeting a claim of clearness of vision as their peculiar possession and birth right: as far above them, I believe, as the sturdy self-reliance and the strong commonsense of Emerson places him above the race of visionary mystics who would talk metaphysics and transcendentalism over their dinner. I have always had a feeling of nausea in company of the literal people, the anatomisers and calculators, and a mortal dread of the professional pessimists. A literal man cannot “hear a bird’s song without attempting to render it into nouns and verbs.” The calculator is the worst materialist. He will let nothing be magical and musical: he will not take anything largely and genially, but must apply his foot-measure and microscope to every part and atom of the world around him. The anatomiser is the most criminal murderer. He will dissect poetry and music and ‘botanise on his mother’s grave.’ His glance is never total and comprehensive, and his soul is made up of fragments and splinters. . . . The pessimist is the most dreadful and pathetic figure in the Universe. After every hour of his life he groans out, “Behold, one more hour of my life is gone:” he can never say, “Behold, I have lived an hour.” He can never pass “from a menial and eleemosynary existence into riches and stability.” Their regrets and wailings come to us as the poisonous and reeky puffings of a black and dismal Gehenna. . . . As regards ‘public men,’ I know not for what reason I

cannot find any cord of sympathy between them and myself. probably because I am not a public man myself. Or, perhaps, "he who smites the rock and spreads the water, bidding drink and live a crowd beneath him," "desecrates the deed in doing:" thus, not only the "achievement lacks a gracious somewhat," but, being a public man, "never dares the man put off the prophet," and so remains masked from us for ever. The author is a curious creature and a unique specimen of humanity. He is perennially occupied (except perhaps when actually writing his books) with his prospective work, *viz.*, bookmaking, and subordinates all other thoughts and actions to this lodestar of his life, this *Primum Mobile* of his firmament. If you attempt to have a little chat with such a person, you will soon perceive that you are speaking not to the author-man, but to the man *minus* the author, or (in case he wishes to make a character or a paragraph out of you) the author *minus* the man. I hope to write a book myself to show and prove without a shadow of doubt how insulting this is to all who are not authors, and how ridiculous this is for the author himself. Next, I cannot help waxing indignant over the delicate effrontery and the air of omniscience of connoisseurs, art-critics and the rest of the lot. Somehow or other, academicians are too ponderous and solid a people to affect me with any other feeling but repulsion. Lastly, as to philologists, they appear to me much in the same position as geologists—the results of their labour are often pleasant and can while away half an hour after dinner if written in the 'popular' style,—but the persons themselves . . . well, all I can say is that they have come from another world to initiate us into the mysteries of words, from "an ampler ether, a diviner air," and as such, we offer them all homage and worship,* and lend our ears to the mellifluous warblings of this host of angels.

Mathematical people are often the reverse of the philological—they themselves are delightful personalities, full of pleasant eccentricities and original oddities—they are the most crotchety race on Earth—while the results of their labour 'would make a Quintilian stare and gasp'. The queer signs and figures employed by those people in their books and studies, and the uncouth Greek characters sprinkled over the pages of all mathematical books, serve to make them all the more enigmatical and hieroglyphic. Who shall unravel for me their secret mysteries? What unknown St. Paul shall open for me the doors of the mathematical heaven?

Scientists and mathematicians have always a superfluity of genuine enthusiasm about them, which is communicated to everyone coming in contact with

* This is no doubt very graceful of the author, who has to read a few philological textbooks in his class. These books are his *bête noir*.

them and this makes them peculiarly charming company. I have ever been a lover of enthusiasts and idealists—and scientists and mathematicians are often first-rate idealists, and have often new projects and new Utopias to offer to this old and dreary world of ours, though their plans are almost always rejected (this is the invariable characteristic of idealists—that they are rejected by the world). The immortality gained by the elixir of lactic bacteria, the growing of plants by chemistry and electricity, the communication with Mars by electric waves, the antiseptic life of bounding health and robust strength, the conquest of the air by aeroplanes—are not these intoxicating ideals poetic and majestic and sublime? Genuine enthusiasm is always poetic and romantic, always beautiful and fascinating.

I won't say a word on philosophers, for I am always mortally afraid of them. But of *young* philosophers, I have a world of words to say. These blossoming philosophers are always good people perverted by their philosophies, young natures turned grey ere their prime. They somehow give me the same impression that I receive from a grey sky canopying a green and laughing landscape: at bottom fresh and lovable, if you can only penetrate through the uninviting envelope. 'Perverted' did I say? Nay, I have no wish to be humorous at the cost of this high-aspiring race, for all their defects and shortcomings. If you look at their far-gazing eyes, trying to look deep and wisdom-laden, do you not also catch the tremulous motion of the beautiful soul within, and hear the vibrations of a heart beating high with visions of immortal truths and eternal grandeurs? Truly do these young seekers of fadeless verities, these rapt watchers of an ever-widening sky, deserve the love and admiration of those that are not born with their visionary-seeming eyes and their idealistic temperaments.

There remains a class who have no enthusiasm of the *active* sort (if there can be any inactive enthusiasm), and they can be included under the title of idlers and epicureans. This too is a notable race, and merits our attention and deference. Once some born idler wrote a paper on the philosophy of idleness in this very Magazine, and remarked on "the cheerful complacency, the easy nonchalance, the serene optimism, the philosophic calm, the life beyond the bounds of time and space, the anticipation of immortality, the healthy independence, the aristocratic isolation, the unfathomable rest, the mystic tranquility, the dreamy grandeur, the impalpable idealism, the enveloping etherial consciousness, the transcendental eudæmonism, which are some of the characteristics of the ideal race." With these words I beg to take leave of my reader, only asking whether it is possible for any man to withstand the irresistible attraction of this blissful race.

POETRY AND THE SCIENTIFIC MOVEMENT.

"Ring in the love of truth and right,
 Ring the fuller minstrel in."—*Tennyson*.

Macaulay, in one of his brilliant essays*, has laid down in his characteristically sweeping way that with the advance of knowledge and civilisation, there is invariably a decline in the poetic literature. In other words, poetry and the finer arts, like the slides of a magic lantern, produce their highest effect in a dark age of superstition and ignorance. If this sweeping generalisation be true, then the modern era, which is essentially an era of culture and criticism, hardly presents

The Problem and its importance. a cheering prospect to the cultivation of artistic literature. And, to a modern reader, no problem is of deeper interest than this question about the growing conflict, real or apparent, between knowledge and imagination, between the scientific and the poetic spirit, which finds a more serious expression in our day than in the day of Macaulay.

At first sight, the relation of poetry to the scientific movement of the time seems to be one of antagonism. The poet and the idealist indignantly complain that the meddling intellect of the scientific man has taken all poetry out of the rainbow, has destroyed all glamour from the face of the earth, mis-shaping the

The common notion, the scientist's and the poet's attitude towards each other. beauteous forms of things by a dissection of their intricate and indefinite charm†. On the other hand, the scientist's love of realism and precision makes him look down upon

poetry as all moonshine and mist—a fragile woof of vague dreams and airy nothings which melts away at the touch of reality.

Before proceeding to discuss how far the poet's embarrassment at the progress of scientific research is justifiable, I shall dwell briefly at the outset, on the objections which the worldly minded economist and the matter-of-fact

A criticism of the scientist's attitude towards poetry. scientist urge against the study of poetry. The first ground on which all works of art are disparaged is their

supposed "in-utility." Does poetry ever help us to procure the actual necessa-

Has Poetry no "utility"? rities of life or teach us how to save ourselves from starving?

The hard facts of life demand our attention more than the fictions of poetry; we must live before we think or enjoy, and so poetry must give way to science which teaches us the means of living. On this view of the matter, therefore, the baker or the butcher is a more valuable citizen than the poet or the philosopher; and the tragedies of Shakespeare are worthless by the side of

* On Milton.

† See Wordsworth's *Poet's Epitaph* and *Tables Turned*: also see Ainger's *Charles Lamb* (Eng. men of letters), p. 86.

Todhunter's Arithmetic. Again, by the same process of reasoning, we can easily prove the in-utility of religion and morality, too. It is hardly needful to point out that the fallacy of such an argument lies in the too narrow restriction of the word 'utility' to denote only visible and tangible objects to the exclusion of those finer joys and emotions which form the larger part of human existence.

It has also been alleged that the spirit of poetry is not truth but untruth. "The truest poetry is the most feigning."† Poetry is nothing more than romantic sentimentalism ; how can the modern spirit, which has freed itself from all sentimental delusion be dominated by mere melodious falsehoods ? But a little reflection will show that this unjust depreciation of poetry hardly pierces beyond its external. This criticism ignores one simple and fundamental distinction, viz., the distinction between the mechanism and the spirit of poetry. Fiction is merely the attractive outward garb in which the poet clothes the truth that he seeks to impart : and the author who cares more for the accompaniments of poetry than the poetry itself is no poet but a rhymster. Deep in the subtle music and the idealistic charm of a poem lies the hidden realities about our actual life. Gray finely expressed this idea when he described poetry as "Truth severe in fairy fiction dressed."

The scientist looks on the world before him and proceeds to know it, its laws and its workings, bit by bit. In his mind's eye there is a picture of the future, when the secrets of nature will be so mastered that there will be no mystery, no hazy vagueness on which fancy can play and frolic. Man will live by the eternal laws of Nature in joy and gladness, and will reject everything that proceeds from heated fancy or from an ignorance of these laws. So, says the scientist, play on, sing on, thou poet ! but thy day will one day be over. Thou shalt be banished from the universe ; thou shalt realise, like your Keats,

Only the dreamer venoms all his days
Bearing more woe than all his sins deserve.

Thou dreamy idealist, the great Real will catch hold of thee, thou shalt have to acknowledge thy defeat. Then thou shalt see the downfall and eternal ruin of thy Alma-castles and Armida-palaces and Babel-towers ! The waters of life shall recede from thy lips and will quench not thy Tantalean thirst § ; and then thou wilt lie down to compose thy epitaph amidst the gladness and joy of thy fellowmen around thee—

† As you like it.

§ See Principal Brajendra Nath Seal's *New Essays in criticism*, the Essay on *Keat's Mind and Art*

"Here lies one whose name was writ in water!"

But peace! Is the future of poetry so gloomy as the scientist's vision describes it to be? Will there come a day when there will be no longer any necessity for poetry at all? Is poetry a mere article of luxury and refinement—an unvalued toy—which will never survive the irresistible march of Science and Realism? What is there in poetry which gives us a pledge of its immortality?

All these questions imply—Has poetry any solid ground to stand upon or does it merely embody baseless fiction? Poetry may be a good thing, but nothing that is false can live for ever.

It must be admitted at the outset, that our scientist, in a haughty spirit of iconoclasm, forgets that the emotional life of man forms a large part of his existence. We are often such stuffs as dreams are made of, and a large share of our joys and sorrows springs as much from our illusions, dreams, and fancies as from what we call the realities of life. The psychologist will tell us that all the best things that we do, we do from pure impulse; that all the dynamical elements of our actions are supplied by our feelings and emotions, the cold calculating intellect serving merely as a controlling agent. Emotion and imagination being thus ineliminable elements of life, they always strive for self-expression. Life is never wholly intellectual: it is not merely "an adjustment of means to an end." There is a stream of impulse from within, which, acted on from without, seeks to publish itself in visible characters. These quick stirrings of a larger and grander life are as far from being wholly intellectual as they are from being wholly unreasonable. And this utterance and self-publication of the inward spirit of man—this record of his intensest and best moments given out instinctively—is the foundation of all art, of all poetry. Poetry is but the utterance of the joy or sadness of life. It is not a thing forced or unnatural—it comes easy to man in the pure intoxication of joy, or pain, as the song comes natural to the bird. Says Tennyson:

"I do but sing because I must
And pipe but as the linnets sing."

Again, are all the dreams and romances of life pernicious? Must we always look grave and assume a hundredweight countenance? It is true that ideals are not all attainable in this life—they fade away before the coarse realities of the world. But must we renounce all thoughts of the perfect and the infinite, of beauty and grandeur, and come down to the level of ordinary life because it may be dangerous to struggle after too lofty an ideal? Idealism may not be worth

|| The epitaph which Keats directed to be placed on his tomb.

¶ *In Memoriam*.

anything in the light of sordid utilitarianism. But it delights, enchants, refines and elevates us. So long as the very substance of the human heart is not changed by the chemistry of utilitarianism and so long as there is beauty and joy in this universe, a truly great poet will continue to hold his empire. If human nature be not false, how can poetry be false?

After all, the scientist cannot exhaust all the secrets of nature. His in-

Scientist's inability to exhaust all the secrets of Nature and to satisfy all the cravings of the human heart.

satiable thirst after knowledge is never satisfied. The scientist, like Byron's Cain, travels from constellation to constellation, across the abyss of space, guided in his flight by Lucifer or the spirit of science, who promises to gratify

his thirst. But what is the result of all his experience? In bitter disappointment

Byron's *Cain* and Goethe's *Faust* typifies this.

and self-pity Cain cries out despairingly, like many a scientist of our day—"Alas! poor wretches! what *knows* man!"

(Act ii, sc. ii). All his strivings after knowledge end in bitter scepticism or agnosticism. Life remains still an unsolved mystery, a sphinx's riddle. He perceives that life is not all reason—not all plain daylight. It is the mingling of the light and the shadow, the seen and the unseen, the conscious and the unconscious, that constitutes life. If we have to leave life as sacred and as whole as

Want of the ideal element in the scientist's view of life and nature makes it incomplete.

anything that we exclude may not carry vast potentialities, and latent powers—then shall our aversion to poetry and sentiment vanish—then shall a clearer insight and a deeper

presentiment purge our warped spirits of all prejudice and crookedness, and teach us to respect the song of existence as much at least as we respect the teachings and the truths that science reveals to us.

It must not be supposed here that in making a stand for the poet, I am crying down the scientist. Indeed there may be scientists who see in reality a greater music than rhymes and stanzas ever revealed, who have an ear too fine to be satisfied with what has been done, and have often heard and felt a poetry to which what people generally call poetry is as the tinkling of brazen cymbals. I acknowledge that there is a music that words cannot express, there are suggestions that are lost the moment you take up a pen, there are yearnings towards the infinitude, floods of influences from an ever-widening horizon, which the soul cannot receive but in silence and passiveness. And there have been poets of science who have heard a greater Iliad, a vaster symphony than what the Muses have unfolded to their children. Our controversy is not with

these; but with the man who asks us, "What does your *Paradise Lost* prove? of what use can it be to the world?"

Indeed, it will not do for the poet to cry down the scientist. However much we may lament that the scientist has torn off the veil of

Why the poet cannot cry down the scientist. The importance of the scientist's work.

enchantment from the face of the Earth, it must be admitted the scientific truths and discoveries have exerted an enormous influence over modern ways of thinking and

have radically affected some of the older views of life. Science has been called an iconoclast : but it is far more easy than true to say that the scientific movement or the scientific studies deaden all poetic impulses. We cannot call that study barren which gives so much scope to imagination, and which tells us of the mysteries of suns and moons, the reign of law in the universe, vastness of Time and Space, the great Totality of Existence, the idea of evolution and gradual progress, the mysterious conception of Force.

Are the conceptions of science barren of all practical fruit in poetry?

Is there anything frigid or paralysing in these vast and elevating ideas? A plodding didactic intellect is not

strictly scientific : for how would an intellect dare soar into the mysteries of the universe, unless animated by a passionate love of truth and not a small degree of the imaginative faculty? The object of science is the knowledge of facts ; while that of art is to carry these facts alive into the heart through passion and imagination and awaken our inward life to a higher consciousness. But

How the discoveries of science affect the conceptions of Art.

since all our emotions and feelings are nourished and guided by the intellect, that study which widens the sphere of knowledge must also invariably influence the

conceptions of Art. Thus Poetry must accommodate itself, within some limitations, to our conceptions of life and the universe, as modified by science.

Yet then, why does the modern idealist feel embarrassed at the progress

The idealist's embarrassment at the progress of science and Realism.

of science? why do the poets throw down their lyre, some surrendering themselves to the intellectualism of the time, while others lamenting, with Keats, that

"glory and loveliness have passed away"?

Some reflections will show that the embarrassment of the idealist springs

Its probable cause.

among other causes from a fundamental misconception of the position of art in relation to knowledge. All the

new conceptions and the new beauties which science daily wrests from the unknown, these visionary idealists eschew as poison : and

Misconception of the position of Art in relation to knowledge.

they curse the new spirit of investigation which brings definiteness in our conceptions, as a formidable iconoclast,

upturning all traditional beliefs and simple faiths. But that idealism which

The ideal and the real—how related.

disdains to have any touch of reality is false. How can you form ideals if you do not ground them upon actuali-

ties? The idealist also forgets that the natural progress, in poetry as well as in

other things, is from the simple to the complex—from the naive intuitive way of looking at things to its harmonising with their newer and deeper phases.

True idealism does not consist in a total abandonment of Realism.

The ideal and the real may be antithetical but never antagonistic to each other. They are complementary; and the true synthesis lies in their harmony. "If we

grub down on the floor of realism with no ideal set before us like the wide heavens in the sky above us, we are doomed to receive what we deserve—the bespattering of the mire and the dirt. Or if, on the other hand, we live in a world of mere dreams and fancies, and do not keep touch with realities of life which are thronging around "us, we fail to satisfy our natural cravings for what is tangible and comprehensible." Thus, the Poet, who is really concerned with the ideal must not at the same time lose sight of the real. Just as the scientist sometimes errs in completely ignoring the ideal, the idealist to-day is em-

The Poet in relation to actualities.

The poet is not yet familiarised with the new conceptions of science. They do not come natural to him.

This is the only hindrance to the approaching harmony between Poetry and Science: and the causes of the poet's embarrassment.

Antagonism between Poetry and Science more apparent than real, and only temporary.

barrassed only because he has not properly understood the spiritual significance of the newer relations of things which science strives to establish. We are not yet thoroughly familiarised with the new conceptions of science. We live and move in a world not yet realised, and our former simple faith always strives to reassert itself. This non-adaptability of the new element of reality furnished by science to the old element of ideality is at the root of all the antagonism between Poetry and Science—an antagonism which is temporary and more apparent than real.

The only real antagonism that exists between Poetry and Science lies in the different methods which each pursues. DeQuency

The only real antagonism lies in this different "methods" adopted by them.

has divided Literature into two classes—the literature of knowledge and the literature of power. The one *teaches*, the other *moves*. The literature of knowledge comprises

History, Criticism and other kindred branches, while the literature of power is embraced by Poetry, Drama, the higher forms of prose literature. In modern times, the scientific method has been adopted by History and Criticism, attended with both gain and loss; but to the literature of power or the literature proper, this method cannot be applied without prejudice to its natural growth. For, the literature proper is nothing if not *personal*. It concerns itself with the indi-

Why the Scientific Method cannot be applied to Poetry and Drama, though it may be applied to History and Criticism.

vidual—his joys and sorrows, hopes and aspirations: while science excludes the individual, the vision of a scientist being required to be absolutely free from sentiment or any other personal factor. Man by nature is an unscientific animal, full of contradictions and inconsistencies, perpetually overborne by circumstances. Hence

Man by nature an unscientific animal.

all his tumultuous passions and feelings cannot be reduced to a system. Poetry and drama must stick to their own method, although they may be stimulated by the scientific spirit in the direction of precision and other preliminaries. Thus the scientific method which is fundamentally at war with the poetic, can never modify or influence it.

But the striking results of scientific enquiry and the ideas which it has embodied, have exerted a vast influence upon the poet's view of the universe.

How the 'scientific results' have enlarged and renewed the poet's conception of the world.

Professor Dowden in his *Studies in Literature* has given a masterly summary of the most important cosmical ideas which have enlarged and renewed the poetic conception of the world: and he has traced their influence

on the various modern poets. These ideas are, according to him, (1) the idea of the vastness of the Universe and of the agencies that work in it; man as a part of the Cosmos, and not a sole monarch on the throne of creation; (2) the idea of Law reigning in the Universe. "Nothing is that errs from law" (Tennyson); (3) the idea of the world as a totality, resulting in higher pantheism; (4) the idea of force; (5) the idea of evolution and human progress especially marked in Tennyson and Browning; (6) the idea of the relativity of knowledge—the idea of historical relativity.

Prof Dowden's summary of the cosmical ideas of modern science which have affected Literature.

Influence of science in the sphere of Philosophy and Ethics—and indirectly in the sphere of Art.

In addition to these we must bear in mind that science has given Positivism to Philosophy and its high ideal of the worship of humanity—which, again, is not without its influence on literature. In the sphere of Ethics its influence has replaced the older theories of self-mortification by that of self-development or self-culture.

All these facts show that the modern poet has realised that the present

All these show that the modern intellectual period in poetry is a traditional one, preparing the way for the approaching harmony between Poetry and Science.

intellectual period in Poetry is a transitional one and that the era of fuller prophecy, when all conflict between poetry and science will cease, is yet to come. "Poetry is struggling," to quote the words of a well-known critic of the Victorian era, "to free herself from the old and to

enter upon the new, to cast off a weight of precedent and phenomenal imagery and avail herself of the more profound suggestion and more resplendent beauty of discovered truths: and the poet would not forbid her to light the flames of her imagination at the torch which Science carries with a strong and forward-beckoning hand."* For, is it possible that the new facts and the new lights, which Science is striving to impress upon us will be lost to poetry, when all

* Stedman's *Victorian Poets*.

great ideas in this world are never without their inspiration? This is the problem—the problem of ultimate synthesis—which faces every writer of poetry

Wordsworth on the future relation of Poetry and Science—how the poet ought to welcome and transfigure the grand ideas and facts furnished by Science.

in this transitional stage, and Wordsworth, in the Preface to the second edition of his Poems thus writes in a hopeful tone on the future relations of Poetry and Science.

“The object of the poet’s thoughts,” he says, “are everywhere—though the eyes and senses of men are, it is true,

his favourite guides, yet he will follow wheresoever he can find an atmosphere of sensation in which to move his wings. Poetry is the first and last knowledge—it is immortal as the heart of man. If the labours of the men of Science should ever create any material revolution, direct or indirect, in our condition, and in the impressions which we habitually receive, the poet will sleep then no more than at present : he will be ready to follow the steps of the man of Science, not only in those general indirect effects, but he will be at his side, carrying sensation into the midst of the objects of the Science itself. The remotest discoveries of the chemist, the botanist, or minerologist will be as proper objects of the poet’s art as any upon which it can be employed, if the time should ever come when these things shall be familiar to us, and the relations under which they are contemplated by the followers of the respective sciences shall be manifestly and palpably material to us as enjoying and suffering beings. *If the time should ever come when what is now called Science thus familiarised to men, shall be ready to put on, as it were, a form of flesh and blood, the poet will lend his divine spirit to aid the transfiguration, and will welcome the Being thus produced, as a dear and genuine inmate of the household of man.*”

Let us conclude. We have seen that it is vain and idle to say that Poetry will die out under the stress of “scientific iconoclasm.” It will live as long as Joy and Beauty will live in this world. Poetry is not essentially the fiction, the metaphor, the fanciful colouring that strikes the eye. We will cherish the Iliad and the Paradise Lost in spite of their falseness of details or scientific inaccuracy for the sake of its inward spirit which is still true to man. Poetry, too, stands for Truth, as Truth reveals itself to the loving spirit of man. As man progresses from truth to truth under the mighty guidance of Science, Poetry too will move higher and higher, incorporating to itself the conquests of the Intellect. If there is any conflict to-day between Poetry and Science it is temporary. The Poet is not yet familiarised with the true significance of the dazzling discoveries of Science. But with a longer and loftier vision, the conflict will cease, and “a fresh inspiration will express itself in new symbols, new imaginary and beauty, suggested by fuller truth.” The modern critical and scholarly period of Poetry points unmistakably towards such a consummation

in the future. It is not meant, however,* that "the fuller minstrels" of the future should sing merely the glories of the Botanic Garden* or the Purple Island† but that they will be

"The only truth-tellers now left to God :
The only speakers of essential truth,
Opposed to relative, comparative,
And temporary truths ; the only holders by
His sun-skirts."‡

For, they must always remember that the province of the Poet is totally different from that of the Scientist. Science, we should do well to bear in mind, is the product and minister of knowledge, while Poetry is the offspring and the divine minister of Joy that is immortal : for truly we may even now repeat what was first uttered thirty centuries ago :—

The province of the poet is distinct from that of the Scientist ; yet they are not antagonistic, but complimentary.

আনন্দাকোষে ধর্ম্মানি ভূতানি জায়ন্তে, আনন্দেন জাতানি জীবন্তি, আনন্দং
প্রযত্ন্যভিসংবিশন্তি ।

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SOME ASPECTS OF WORDSWORTH'S POETRY.

(Continued from the last issue.)

Though never lacking the freshness and flavour of a new era of literary art, the characteristic charm of Wordsworth's poetry lies, we have seen, in its spiritual insight, its sober colouring, and its pervading atmosphere of chastened and simple emotions. But even on its meditative side, it is subject to sharp limitations. There is indeed great charm in the comparative novelty of his style of thinking, in his crude half-pantheistic half-mystical meditations on life and human soul, but they seem to lack the healthy vigour of a great intellect. The lofty visions of the meditative seer or the rapt utterances of the inspired poet are too often marred by the dogmatic speculations, the cheap philosophisings, and the fantastic theories of the protestant-philosopher. He could seldom think with bold originality or deep insight on things properly human : he lacked the intellectual

* By Erasmus Darwin (1792).

† By Phineas Fletcher (1638).

‡ Elizabeth B. Browning.

grasp of a Browning, the cosmopolitan sympathies of a George Eliot or the dramatic vigour of a Shakespeare. He early regarded himself as a "a dedicated spirit" (*Prelude*, Bk. IV.) and this haunting consciousness made him a pedagogue the moment he wanted to be a "teacher." For he was very apt to forget the truism that the proper appeal of poetry consists, not in the inculcations of precepts or principles, but in the vastness of its suggestions, the depth of its hints and glimpses, the atmosphere it creates or the mood it induces. Wordsworth was never a versatile man; and his poetry for ever moves in a narrow and determined groove. His genius is thoroughly English, his patriotism local, and his philosophy often too unphilosophical. Even his meditative calm, the natural outcome of a smooth and easy life, passed in rustic silence and seclusion, fails to exercise that amount of fascination over us which the hard-won serenity of Goethe does. Wordsworth speaks as one who has known the secret of perpetual content, but we are denied the sight of the battle he fought and the victory he won.

In his life, as in his poetry, Wordsworth failed to create an impression by the amplitude of his powers, though he always commanded respect by the originality of his genius and by the fine rustic simplicity and dignity about him. In the instances left to us of his intercourse in private life, recorded by persons who had the advantage of judging him from a distance, we almost always find a sense of disappointment, even of repulsion, at his stiffness and awkwardness. When a friend asked Dickens, after his interview with Wordsworth, how much he liked the poet, the well-known retort was—"Like him? Not at all. He is a dreadful old ass." And even such was the impression of Emerson who had come from across the Atlantic to pay his respects to the great poet, though he writes in a more just and tempered tone. "Wordsworth honoured himself," said Emerson, "by his simple adherence to truth and was very willing not to shine; but he surprised by the hard limits of his thought. To judge from a single conversation, he made the impression of a narrow and very English mind; of one who paid for his rare elevation by general tameness and conformity."

It is needless perhaps to point out that some of these limitations of Wordsworth sprang, as also did his strength, from the many circumstances of his life. In no other case does the work of a writer reflect so much of his private life. When we take into account the peaceful tenour of his idyllic life, comparatively free from stormful unrest, we can understand easily the reflective calm—the lack of stress and strife—that pervades his poetry as well as his solemn protestant-philosophical musings on 'life and human soul.' Unlike the modern poets, who, to quote Mathew Arnold, have "no shelter to grow ripe, no leisure to grow wise," Wordsworth had enough leisure for solitary contemplation, without

which he could never have produced his fine reflective pieces and his inimitable nature-poems and idylls ; but at the same time he felt the effects of too much leisure and suffered, as Harriet Martineau points out, from having nothing to do, just as his friend Southey suffered from the excess of his industry. As on the one hand, his unusually secluded and comfortable life made him fit to receive with an open soul the gentle influences of Nature and be her High-priest which he was ; so on the other hand, his isolation from the main streams of active life and his self-contained seclusion, holding no intercourse with other minds either through books or conversation, had its injurious effect on the growth of his mind and art. The self-absorption and egotism which proved so irritating to many of his visitors in private conversation was only a natural result of this isolation for a man of great independence and self-sufficiency of character. Moreover, the slow and late recognition of his genius and the constant vituperation with which his works were received made him depend more upon himself and defy the hostile public. This unjust opposition as well as the admiration of his few worshipping friends enhanced the natural stiffness of his controversial temper and his singular lack of humour which refused to see things with other people's eyes. The consequence of all this, as might be supposed, was an entire absence of self-criticism ; and this accounts for the importance which he attached to his most trivial poems, his monotonous insistence on the value of his theory of poetic diction, and the almost ludicrous solicitude with which he recorded the most trifling emotions which crossed his mind as if they were things of utmost importance. These are as natural to a man of Wordsworth's temperament as they are tedious or laughable to us ; for never there was a poet more thoroughly self-absorbed or more thoroughly deficient in the sense of the comic.*

Just as a healthy contact with the life and opinion of his contemporaries would have proved beneficial to the development of his literary art, so a study of the thoughts of his mighty predecessors would have removed his self-centred indifference and enlarged the narrow limits of his tastes and interests. But Wordsworth cared very little about books and opinions. Of his contemporaries, none seems to have engaged his attention, much less his admiration, except perhaps Scott† and Coleridge, the latter of whom seems to have had

* As an instance, Crabb Robinson writes :—" On my alluding to the line,

'I've measured it from side to side,

'Tis three feet long and two feet wide,'

and confessing that I dared not read them aloud in company, he said, 'They ought to be liked.' " (9th May, 1815.)

† Though we learn from Landor that Wordsworth pronounced Scott's poetry to be "not worth five shillings."

some influence over him as regards shaping his poetic tastes and his natural gift of melody. Of his predecessors, only Burns and Milton seem to have exercised any direct influence over him.* Imitating Burns, he carried the Romantic movement to its excesses, and in a spirit of reaction against the extreme artificiality of the XVIIIth century poetry, he went to the other extreme, trying to put into practice his startling theory that there is no essential difference between the language of poetry and prose. Of Wordsworth's resemblance to Milton, critics have long been busy over the question; and it is needless to recapitulate it here. But after all, it remains unquestionable that Wordsworth's debt to both of these poets does not extend very far. To trace his poetic ancestry beyond this is almost impossible. Indeed, Wordsworth is the least receptive of all poets and the least indebted to others. What he has given us is peculiarly his own. The limitations of his literary culture had its good as well as its evil effects. As on the one hand, it restricted the range of his ideas and tastes and nourished his egotism, so it did, on the other hand, make him rely more upon nature and inspiration than upon literature and gave much scope to develop his original powers. But his intellectual isolation had also its risk. As he disregarded all external aids and common allurements, he was made to depend entirely on inward inspiration, which, when it failed, made his poems heavy or insipid. Much of the imperfections and inequalities of Wordsworth's poetry is due to this fact.

Speaking of the inequalities of Wordsworth's poetry, it has indeed been remarked with great truth that the works of no other poet improve so much by judicious pruning and selection as Wordsworth's voluminous essays. Side by side with his flashes of real brilliance, he has verses worthless and bulky enough to damn half a dozen minor poets. It is only too often and for long that the light is not that which was never on sea or land; and few poets, it has been remarked, can surpass the dulness of Wordsworth at his dullest.

The extreme length to which he carried his theory of poetic expression and the excessive poetical importance which he attributed to the representation of

* Cowper and Goldsmith seem to have been his model in his earlier poems which, as originally printed, contained much of the "poetic diction" against which he protested so vigorously later on.

§ It is a note-worthy fact that Wordsworth modified his tone and attitude of mind on this subject as he grew older. The unqualified adoption of 'the language of conversation in the middle and lower classes of society,' advocated by him in the earliest edition of the *Lyrical Ballads*, was changed (perhaps through the influence of Coleridge's criticism and a study of his own mind and method) into "a selection of the real language of men in a state of vivid sensation," in the later edition. In 1816 again his mind underwent a further change; but it is a pity that he could not, to his infinite benefit, realise earlier the truth or truism that the language of poetry is something essentially different from that of ordinary prose, which lacks the magic touch of idealisation.

rural life are responsible for many of these lapses into baldness and triviality. He sometimes selected themes which no genius could make poetic ; and his simplicity often verged upon childishness. The perpetual intrusion of puerile phraseology more than once mars his noblest passages ; and though he has often succeeded in adopting "the very language of men," he has thereby only produced verses which no stretch of literary charity can reconcile to us as containing any poetry at all. It is only when he broke loose from his theory that his finest poetry was fine ; and this fact very aptly illustrates the futility of all theories in binding a man of genius.

Any estimate of Wordsworth's poetry would be incomplete without an appreciation of his speciality—the exquisite nature poems and rural idylls : but to do justice to them would require a treatment which would far exceed our limits. Of his political poems it would be enough to indicate here that they seldom reach the high-water mark of his peculiar genius. The limitations of his political creed and the purely local nature of his patriotism prevented him from discerning the true spirit of his times and made him set his face against the irresistible march of progress and reform. It is only when he writes upon the ethical side of political questions that his voice always rings true. "His social grasp," it has been said, "is surer than his political" . and here again the moral fervour and dignity of his genius is evident.

Thus we see that the merits and defects of Wordsworth's poetry are alike very great. His frequent descents into prose and wilful adorning of trivialities, the tincture of unelastic puritanism in his life and thoughts, the narrow limits of his ideas, the repetition and monotonous harping on a definite system of axioms and opinions, his complacent self-contentedness, the bald egotism, the lack of plasticity or nimbleness of thinking,—when all these force themselves upon our attention we cannot but be filled with a painful sense of his imperfections. Yet after all has been said, his poetry remains the perpetual source of enjoyment and instruction as long as our inborn delight in nature and joy in simple emotions continue to live. Much of the best things he has left us is indeed disfigured by encumbering theories, self-thoughts and fancies, yet we are to judge Wordsworth by the dictum that the greatness of a writer ought to be measured by his highest flights, by those rarer flashes which the world will not willingly let die. There are, it is true, queer ups and downs in his poetry but if we for once separate the dross from the ore, we shall hardly find any other poet in the range of English Literature more fertile in original impulses and less sensitive to influences than Wordsworth. The only influences under which he wrote were Nature and his own inward impulse ; and with such inspiration, his chief poetic appeal consists in a return to simplicity and naturalness, in

throwing a veil of sacredness about the simple sights and simple objects of nature, in creating an atmosphere of profoundly religious charm around our common everyday life. He speaks little that is entirely novel or startling ; he seldom goes to history or mythology for his subject-matter ; he sings of love, charity, duty, simple emotions and regulated passions ; he was as great an egotist as ever a Byron or a Shelley was ; but we come to Wordsworth not for his passions or ideas but for his faithful worship of Nature and the natural. Whenever he writes on these themes he seldom writes with effort ; and there is a sense of open-air freshness and robust enjoyment in his nature-poems which we scarcely find in any other English poet. The Cumbrian dalesman's life seems to be a part of Nature herself and the healing solitude of his environment to be in perfect unison with the peace and calm within. If there is any lack of the moving force of passion in Wordsworth, it is compensated by his passionate love of Nature and its inspiring activity ; and, as Carlyle says, "a fine wholesome rusticity, fresh as his mountain-breezes, sits well on the stalwart veteran, and on all that he says and does."

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"In the Study."

PICTOR IGNOTUS.

By R. Browning.

Pictor Ignotus is a sixteenth century painter in cloisters and churches. His life is passed in the monotonous occupation of painting "the same series, Virgin, Babe and Saint" over "endless cloisters and eternal aisles," without any possibility of his name extending beyond the precincts of the churches or monasteries. His pictures remain "blackening in the daily candle-smoke," and "moulder on the damp wall's travertine," unrecognised and unappreciated by the world. Meanwhile, in the world outside, another young painter is dazzling all people by his wonderful pictures ; his name is on everybody's lips ; great

states and cities greet the young artist with ready homage and proffered honour : the learned and the wise all praise the products of his brush ; young aspirants in painting sit at his feet to imbibe his genius. Flowers are showered upon the car which carries his paintings to some foreign city or capital, and old streets are named afresh from such events.

But to the soul of Ignotus all this praise of the young genius spells nothing but a strange mingling of a sigh over a shattered dream and an ironical self-complacency over a doleful reality. "I could have painted pictures," he says, "like that youth's ye praise so."

"No bar
Stayed me—ah thought which saddens while it soothes—
Never did fate forbid me, star by star,
To outburst on your night with all my gift
Of fires from God."

How fondly he dilates and broods on the career on which he might have entered, instead of this dull, monotonous, and dreary occupation of painting endless Virgins and Babes and Saints in dim and unlooked-for aisles and cloisters! All in a moment, the meek and despised painter of pious commonplaces becomes conscious of the "fire from God" which lies slumbering in his bosom, and, in the sad and mournful pride of unrecognised genius—or is it the throbbing consciousness of having made a noble sacrifice, too noble to be understood by common humanity, (a consciousness that shakes off all weak contempts, all the burden of the reproach of inferiority and insignificance which is cast on him by every eye that falls on him),—he declares—

"And, like that youth ye praise so, all I saw,
Over the canvas could my hand have flung,
Each face obedient to its passion's law,
Each passion clear proclaimed without a tongue ;
Whether hope rose at once in all the blood,
A-tiptoe for the blessing of embrace,
Or Rapture drooped the eyes, as when her brood
Pull down the nesting dove's heart to its place,
Or Confidence lit swift the forehead up,
And locked the mouth fast, like a castle braved,—
O Human faces, hath it spilt my cup ?
What did ye give me that I have not saved ? "

He recounts one by one his early ambitions and dreams—he would have lived in every one of his pictures to his appreciating admirers, his pictures would have spread to all the corners of the Earth, and he would have been patronised and favoured by the Pope and the Kaiser, Emperors and other patrons of art ; all the honour, all the fame and success, all the sunshine which the young artist now enjoys would have been his, instead of the dull weariness and the cold obscurity that are now his portion. What splendid life has this Ignotus missed or renounced ! How vividly do all the dreams of his early life, the rich and glorious possibilities of a career that might have been his, now come thronging back on him through the gates of reminiscence ! What a keen note of yearning does all this strike in the cords of his ardent soul !

“ Oh, thus to live, I and my picture, linked
 With love about, and praise, till life should end,
 And then not go to heaven, but linger here,
 Here on my earth, earth's every man my friend,—
The thought grew frightful, 'twas so wildly dear ! ”

* * * * *

What was it, then, that made him exchange this career of fame and honour, this primrose path of aspirations and glorious achievements, for the mean and uneventful life of a cloister-painter ? We know it was no sense of inferiority that led him to make this tremendous sacrifice ; nor was it any pious fervour, any absorbing religious ideal, that has imposed on him this rigid and cold life, void of any ambition or enthusiastic endeavour. With what a chilly disparagement does he speak of his own paintings, “ the same series, Virgin, Babe, and Saint ” ! He feels no touch of an ardent religious faith, when he speaks of “ the sanctuary's gloom ” or that “ only prayer breaks the silence of the shrine.” What could it be that changed the dream of boyhood to the grey and dusty reality of the present ? “ A voice changed it ! ” . . . What figures are these, that come jostling through the crowds of his admirers, in his youthful visions of his glorious future ? What glimpses of this new world are these, the world that bursts on his scared vision, and takes the place of the rosy world of ideals that enthralled his incipient genius ? It is a world of a strange mingling of dreams that have come true with the dust and changour of a clamorous mob, the traffickings of merchants and worldlings, “ the whips and scorns of time . . . the proud man's contumely,” the babblings of “ vain tongues ” and heart-dissecting discussions. The proud spirit of individual sanctity that now rises before him as his guardian angel, cries out to him : “ Lo, this will be thy lot if thou become an artist : these cold

faces, with their restless peering eyes, will press on thee from all sides, will handle thee with no reverent hands, will scrutinise thy pictures as they examine an article of furniture they think of buying : these will jostle out thy 'loving trusting ones' that once gathered round thee, and drag thee to their houses for so many coins just as a drawing-room embellishment !" . . .

"Tho' I stooped
Shrinking, as from the soldiery a nun,
They drew me forth, and spite of me . . . enough !
These buy and sell our pictures, take and give,
Count them for garniture and household-stuff,
And where they live our pictures needs must live,
And see their faces, listen to their prate,
Partakers of their daily pettiness,
Discussed of,—' This I love, or this I hate,
' This likes me more, and this affects me less ! ' "

The pictures which had been painted with the painter's heart-blood, and were dearer to him than any other production of art, however great and sublime,—could they be put to such a degraded use ? Was he to paint them for such petty criticisms, for such weak likings and hatreds—and only to be discussed as mere dead objects of art, as so much canvas and paint, destined to be sold to the highest bidder ? Not a grovelling vanity, not a weak sentimentality, but the proud instinct of self-respect through self-concealment, which will not sell itself for lucre or empty approbation, the vital grace of a beautiful self-love which lies in the bosom of modesty and taciturnity, whispers to him in loving accents, "Nay, my dear child, thou shalt not be a painter : better thou shalt work alone and unseen in the silence of the shrine and the gloom of the sanctuary ; better thy pictures will moulder and fade away in dusky aisles of monasteries ; but here thou wilt be alone to enjoy thy own productions ; thou wilt 'save the man's joy, miss the artist's sorrow' ; thou wilt not, like others, whom 'the minute makes immortal,' prove, perchance, thy mortal in the minute' and 'desecrate, belike, the deed in doing.'—What is the world's praise worth, when the golden peals of its trumpet are sure to change into brazen brayings sooner or later ?

"Blown harshly, keeps the trump its golden cry ?
Tastes sweet the water with such specks of earth ? "

"Just for a handful of silver,—just for a riband to stick in his coat,"—he will not sacrifice the virgin sanctity of his delicate-fibred soul, that cannot brook rough-handling or unsympathetic criticism. " *Wherefore I chose my portion.* "

" If at whiles
 My heart sinks, as monotonous I paint
 These endless cloisters and eternal aisles
 With the same series, Virgin, Babe, and Saint,
 With the same cold, calm, beautiful regard,
 At least no merchant traffics in my heart ;
 The sanctuary's gloom at least shall ward
 Vain tongues from where my pictures Stand apart :
 Only prayer breaks the silence of the shrine
 While, blackening in the daily candle-smoke,
 They moulder on the damp wall's travertine,
 'Mid echoes the light footstep never woke.
 So die, my pictures ? surely, gently, die " !

How does the beautiful pride of the lonely painter gradually merge into a thick and melancholy pathos ! Indeed, the two are very closely related in this case. . . . Elsewhere Browning declares,

" God be thanked, the meanest of his creatures
 Boasts two soul-sides."

In the case of *Pictor Ignatus*, we find that the two soul-sides are not equally developed ; the side which faces the world is absent in him : but the other side, where he reveals his own soul unhesitatingly and with all the intensity of self-realisation through self-expression,—which contains " the novel silent silver lights and darks undreamed of," where he can " hush and bless himself with silence,"—this side rules his whole life and gives shape to all his thoughts and ideals. Yet inwardly he yearns for the praise of the world and a kind of subtle jealousy for the young painter mingles in his soliloquy. Thrice he speaks of the "*youth ye praise so*." But for all this, who will not call this beautiful aloofness, this hermit-like isolation, heroic and sublime ? Who does not feel the profound pathos of his life, the nobleness of his self-sacrifice for his ideal, and the beautiful, though perhaps unpractical, idealism that pervades the whole of this poem ? What a poetry, what lofty pride, we are brought face to face with, in the life of the meek-eyed, submissive, and almost grovelling painter of aisles and cloisters ! What a reproach on our habit of peering into the hearts of artists, on our use of art as a mere embellishment, on our irreverent criticisms of art, on our indifference to the hearts of artists when we judge their productions, do these reflections fling, with such a wonderful force,—though they come from a poor, unnoticed painter of whom nobody ever thought anything while he lived ! . . . Once more the proud pathos of such lines comes to our ears :

" At least no merchant traffics in my heart." . . .
 " Oh, youth men praise so,—holds their praise its worth ?
 Blown harshly, keeps the trump its golden cry ?
 Tastes sweet the water such specks of earth ? "

SPECIMENS OF STYLE.

Plain : After a long period of drought, it rained heavily yesterday.

Involved : Long after the date which had seen, on the last occasion but one, the cloud-covered welkin pouring down watery showers on the earth, came the most welcome day, expected and prayed for through a wide-stretching interval of parching drought, like the day of nativity after the protracted gloom of embryo-life,—the day, I mean, which dawned and closed just before the present day,—when once more the army of *nimbus* clouds gathered in the firmament, in a close, dense, and solid phalanx, dusky, motionless, covering the sky like a blanket, laden with heavy showers and prophetic of the rain which was soon to deluge sun-burnt earth with an unexpected cataclysm of unceasing torrents; once more a downpour of water began, succeeding close after the gathering of the vapoury masses; this time nearly breaking all other records of the year, and flooding all country with an unexpected suddenness.

Poetic : The panting breathings of the parched earth rose through the copper-coloured sky and disturbed the deep quiet of the elemental gods; the crystal clearness and the sapphire brilliance of the upper heavens grew dim and cloudy, like the steaming hill tops of the earth, like the sky seen through the mist of tears. . . . Long had it been thus, and yet the mute prayers of our thirsty sphere had remained unanswered. Far off, like the tremulous gleams of the ministering oasis, on the ridge of the distant horizon, across the gray desert path of the weary caravan, lay the reminiscence, beyond the desolate wastes filled with unavailing wail and unquenched anguish, of a thirst once satisfied, a dreary drouth once blessed with moistening showers: and the homeless winds and the hollow-moaning seas sighed and cried, "Misery, oh, endless misery!" till the caverns of the craggy hills and the hollow heaven replied, "Misery!" . . . Even the Elysian gods could not remain pent up in their large serenity and joyful ease: at their bidding came the bounteous daughters of the sky and the seas, who were basking in the heaven's blue smile and pillowing their heads on the mountains in the Isles of the Blest; or dreaming and floating over azure deeps and purple seas; and then, when all together stood over the firmament of the Earth, her withered face and sunken eyes told them their tale of thirst and anguish; and the daughters of her seas were ashamed of their cold neglect and indifference: without one word they hung down their heads and wept themselves out in torrents of streaming tears.

Scientific : On the 3rd of March, at 5.49 P.M., after an interval of about 4 months, 11 days, 3 hours, a heavy rain began to fall, as anticipated by the barometric indications. The low atmospheric pressure meant an excess of aqueous vapour in the air, which soon began to gather in dark *nimbus* clouds in the sky; the rapidly descending barometer indicated the gradual saturation of the atmosphere: the monsoon being diverted up the valley of the Ganges as an E. S. E. wind, bringing with it a large amount of moisture (about 23 p.c.) from the Indian Ocean and the Bay of Bengal, brought the atmosphere below the point of saturation. Thus a copious rainfall resulted, which did not cease till the rain-gauge had indicated 19½ inches.

Telegraphic : After the rainy season, a long drought. Heavy rain yesterday.

Pathetic : It brings tears to one's eyes to think of the misery caused by the heavy rainy yesterday after the protracted drought. The poor crops, which had been growing in the fields, will, alas! meet with a premature death from its effects. What a frightful multitude of lives have been lost--the lives of insects and worms, ants and caterpillars! Perchance myriads of birds have

at defenceless in the cruel rain, drenching and soaking through and through, their broken voices unable even to utter, however inarticulately, the depth of their suffering and pain! How many wet cats have caterwaulted in vain, how many sheep have bleated and baa-ed pathetically through the dripping night!

Heroic : Once more the cloudy hosts rattled and thundered. Long had they remained silent and asleep, but yesterday, armed with thunder and lightning, they advanced in threatening phalanx to the scorched-up fields of our sky. Grim, gaunt and terrible they stood, a fierce wrath blackening their brows. Earth shuddered with ghastly affright, and ashy and pale was her face . . . The terrible battalions now hurled on her their deadly missiles; but Earth returned not one arrow to their dreadful ranks. Their armour clashed and clanged, their cannons boomed and thundered, their arrows hurtled and rattled, any shot through the air whistling and whizzing, swift, pililess incessant and inexorable.

Sublime : What a wondrous change, wondrous as the changes in the perennial festival of the primeval Aryan skies, passed through the firmament of yesterday!—Long had it been a sky of speckless blue and changeless transparency: the spirit of eternal calm seemed brooding over our mortal world: a halcyon period of ineffable and sacred tranquility seemed to have descended from the heavens . . . All on a sudden, out of the viewless deeps and the caverns of cloudland, came a glorious pageantry of dusky and sombre assembly, like floating mountains they came, in solemn grandeur and mellow loveliness, at length bounteous rain descended from them, like the blessings of heaven upon our earthly soil. When the rain ceased, a jubilant moon was laughing in the bare heavens over miles and of miles of damp earth and rushing torrents.

Sentimental : I felt with thee, dear Earth, thy panting pains and throbbing anguish, when thou lay thirsting for water to moisten thy parched throat: O how thy mute gaze looked up in vain for the face of divine mercy, and only met the hot and fiery stare of the lord of the day! O my dear mother, what bitterness he poured into thy galled bosom! How long hadst thou to suffer thus, while we ate and slept and laughed, and thought not of thy mute sufferings! . . . Then, when the day of thy deliverance did come, how the tears of heavenly pity and the tears of thy joy commingled together in the cup of the Infinite! It was but yesterday, and yet it seems to me a dream that I too could not refrain from tears of joy at the thought that thy longing thirst and desire were quenched for a time at last!

Conversational : Who would have thought of it? what a tremendous down-pour we had yesterday! Really awful, was n't it? good Heavens! it rained regular elephants and buffaloes—no "cats and dogs" this time. I suppose Noah would have cried out against God had he lived yesterday for not giving him fair warning this time. "Lord, I could have builded me another ark," I can imagine the old graybeard grumbling.—And all this after such a terrible drought! a year or two more like this will be enough to make a sad muddle of the cant about the regularity of Nature

Verbose : After a protracted epoch of apluviosity, during which the sublimary *terra firma* remained abnormally exsiccated, on the day preceding the present, a tenebrous and atramental conglomeration of halituous, incrassated and polymorphous masses, of Titanic and Brobdignagian configurations, metamorphosed the quondam immaculate and diaphanous firmament into an opacous and nubilous one; these halituous masses soon commenced to assuage the drought by pouring a cataract of aqueous torrents on the desiccated Earth till she was submered under a catalysm of waters.

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THOUGHTS AND OBSERVATIONS.

Poetry ever comes prior to philosophy. Philosophy is always going to poetry for its highest data as well as for its justification. Again, poetry, at any given moment in history, has a deeper experience of life, a nearer grasp of spiritual realities, a subtler realisation of new experiences, than the current philosophy of the time. The poetry of the mythologies, for all its apparent childishness, embodied a larger experience than the corresponding philosophy. The same may be said of the poetry and the philosophy of the Renaissance, and the Romantic movement in the modern age. Philosophy will never be able to give an account of the spirit of the present hour, to embrace the form of the World-spirit in the present hour of his self-realisation : but poetry, unless it forms a living portion of the highest spiritual experience of the present hour, and is an utterance of the presiding genius of the age, forfeits its claims to be called true poetry. One may, however, defend philosophy from this view by saying, that the critical and reflective spirit is as much a product of the hour as the poetic spirit ; that poetry without a philosophic background is as unjustifiable as philosophy sundered from the experiences of poetry. True : the onward-flowing life as revealed by the poet is as real and sacred and true to the present hour as the spirit which finds its expression through the philosopher. But with regard to every stage in actual experience, certainly poetry is the first to seize and realise it, while the spirit of analysis, criticism and reflection comes to it later. It is true that poetry without a philosophic support cannot live long ; and it is only when poetry has, so to speak, run through an experience untouched by philosophy, and is faltering and waning like a breaking billow, a dying melody, that philosophy can grasp it in its entirety and completeness, and incorporate it into itself. Thus poetry ever transcends the current philosophy of the time, and

is ever tending to the growth and development of the latter; like the shell-fish that "crawls out of its beautiful but stony case because it no longer admits of its growth, and slowly forms a new house."

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Thus is ever the spirit of poetry a lover of the new and the formless, the vague and ethereal world which has never been fully realised, and ever likes to dwell and hover on the confines of the known and the unknown. Only to its beautiful soul is given the joy of following and touching the "shapes that haunt thought's wildernesses." In the heart of poetry dwells the eternal romance which hangs round the mysterious and the indefinite, the new, the original, the unfettered experience of an unsullied world. Thus whenever poets have wanted to embody a philosophy in their poetry, they have miserably failed, both as poets and as philosophers. It is for this reason that the true poetic value of all myths and nature-poems arises not on their being founded on any conscious philosophy, but on their having their roots in the eternal truths of human experience, on human emotions in all their purity and freedom, arising from the depths of our beings without our conscious choice or reflection. Unlike the unifying spirit of philosophy, with its "one spirit's plastic stress," unlike theology or science, with the one creator or one energy, it is the special privilege of poetry to *individualise* everything it looks upon, to live wholly *within* the life of every existence or phenomenon or experience which it deals with at any moment. This was the special characteristic of the Greek art, this mythopœic faculty of the mind. It is true that this faculty must have behind it some kind of philosophy, some semblance of a synthesis, before it can be born at all. But it is only when the human spirit stands on the verge of this synthesis and this philosophy, and sees before it a vaster world rise out of the dim, encircling twilight, full of teeming suggestions and invitations which smell of the unknown, the ever-new, the unrealised, that it takes its joyous plunge into the mysterious deep: and when it wants to speak of its new experiences, what language can it use but the old terminology of the discarded philosophy? It is in this sense only that philosophy can minister to the mythopœic faculty which sits at the heart of all real poetry. When Shelley writes of the cloud, or the moon, or of Arethusa, or of the Earth, he writes of them as "distinct existences, he is not led away from the solitary personality of each by

any universal existence in which they were merged, or by the necessity of adding to these any tinge of humanity, any elements of thought or love, such as the Pantheist is almost sure to add": not that thought and love and humanity, or Pantheism and the sense of "any universal existence" in which everything is merged, is foreign to the sphere of poetry; far from it; but the above extract shows how the poet can merge himself in the soul of everything he writes about, and when he will write of the One Life in which all is merged, his experience will be more vivid and intense than perhaps the philosopher's, simply because it is undisturbed by reason or reflection, and is received by the delicate and receptive nature of the poet.

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Romanticism has always an element of melancholy and pessimism in it. All profound pessimists have had a romantic colouring in their lives and feelings. Schopenhauer's philosophy of pessimism is the outcome of a really romantic temperament—the mood which feels an instinctive aversion to the idea of a rational spirit shaping this world, which cannot part with the fascination of the wayward and capricious elements of life, which will look to a mysterious and unfathomable Will rather than an absolute reason as the central spirit of the universe, and which sees in a life beyond all passion and vanity, beyond all selfishness and will to live, a superhuman grandeur and majesty, greater and higher than this life of ours, this life of restless passion and endless tossing and quenchless longing. It is essentially a romantic view of life, full of a poetic want of proportion and unity. For all his pessimism and his dreary sense of the eternal tragedy, how instinct with a beautiful romance it all appears to be! The whole world, he says, after all, is an evil dream. Deny the will that dreams, and the vision is ended. As for the result, "we confess freely," says Schopenhauer, "what remains, after the entire annulling of the will, is, for all those who are yet full of the will, indeed nothing. But, on the other hand, for those in whom the will has turned again, and has denied itself, this our own so very real world, with all her Suns and Milky Ways, is—Nothing." It is this romanticism that led him to find in music a symbol of this eternally moving, restless, striving, fleeing, changing, wandering Will of the universe. 'Music never rests, never is content; repeats its conflicts and wanderings over and over; leads

them up, indeed, to mighty climaxes, but is great and strong never by virtue of abstract ideas, but only by the might of the will that it embodies. Listen to these cries and strivings, to this infinite restlessness, and then reflect,—*That art Thou* ; just that unreposing vigour, longing, majesty, and—caprice.'



One might illustrate this connection between romanticism and pessimism from poetry as well. Every one knows the rich deliciousness of Keats's melancholy that lies at the heart of his poetry (e.g., in his *Ode to a Nightingale* and *Ode to Melancholy*), the dreary vacancy of Byron's pessimism, the desolate beauty of Shelley's impalpable melancholy :

" A love in desolation masked—a power
Girt round with weakness ; it can scarce uplift
The weight of the superincumbent hour.
It is a dying lamp, a falling shower,
A breaking billow."

Even Wordsworth speaks of the poet as " weak as is a breaking wave." We need not go farther. This sort of poetic pessimism is the inevitable result of romanticism ; for it arises from the descent of the latter from the etherial atmosphere of the idealism which is its native element, into this solid world of rough realities ; the world which is ever being subtilised into a beautiful ideal world, and yet, is ever and anon appearing to the poet as a grey and dusty apparition mocking all his attempts to love and refine and idealise it. In all romantic pessimism we hear the pathetic crash of an ideal world breaking under the onset of the terrible Reality.

THE DEAD PAST.

Antiquity ! thou wondrous charm, what art thou ?
...What half Januses are we, that cannot look
forward with the same idolatry with which we
forever revert !—C. LAMB.

The dim, prehistoric Past—the unknown birth-time of the Pyramids, the far-off ages counted by the Chaldean Saros, those which inscribed the cuneiform characters, the epochs of the Babylonian and Persian inscriptions, the Assyrian cylinders and the Parian marbles, the misty periods of the Hyksos in Egypt, of the Hia and Chow kings in China, the days of the first Aryans, the dim years

resounding with the Vedic hymns and songs—what a dusky twilight shrouds this vague prehistoric Past with an impenetrable obscurity! What weird silence, what a nameless mystery, hangs and hovers round the faint precincts of that dead and unfathomable Past!

This is the region of dim, colossal phantoms, half-seen shapes, unknown shadows, floating about with solemn and sombre movements through a boundless atmosphere of mist, and gathering gloom, and hazy twilight. This is the dreamland of the historian and the archæologist. For their searching gaze has not penetrated much beyond the thick veil that covers those untold years of the primeval Past, and the bright mansions and pavilions which the genius of past civilisations erected seem to have been shattered into dust and cast into oblivion for ever. Though the very soul and being of the dead eras have passed into the fibres of the soul of the present, though this eternal conopying firmament is alive with the quick stirrings and breathings of long-dead Babylon, Memphis, Troy and Tyre and Assyria and Mexico, yet do our imaginations ever and anon return to the dusky borderland between history and prehistory, and try to peer into the impenetrable gloom beyond with a fond hope and a yearning curiosity.

Let us then leave this solid and hard-proven realm of research and lynx-eyed scrutiny, and allow our imaginations to wander for a moment over the pages of the sealed book of undeciphered history. We pierce through external forms and institutions, we go beyond the conscious faiths of the dead, ancient races, beyond the religious and the forms of government that moulded their lives, and, sooner or later, we come upon the common human nature which links them to us, the people of the twentieth century, and which is partly the meaning and the satisfaction of the yearning which turned our eyes beyond the horizon of history into the unknown deeps and the abysmal glooms. Reader, hast thou ever pondered over that phrase "common human nature"? Hast thou ever understood how much it means for thee?—what a vital phrase, quick with the pulse of the Infinite, it is? When thou readest in an inscription, speaking of an event twenty-five centuries ago, "Here did Lord Buddha take his walks," does it not thrill and galvanise thee to thy inmost soul? And when thou readest, in a Greek papyrus, the lease of a farm, a deed of sale or a letter to a friend, does the past appear to thee dead and sepulchred, dumb and frozen for ever? Dost thou not hear a human voice speaking across the vastness of centuries, and feel the throbbing of human hearts within the viewless bodies of long-past generations?

So, in the streets of long-buried cities and forgotten kingdoms, crowds moved and talked, shopped and jostled, just as they do in the streets of this

metropolis. For the common crowd, the people without education or self-reflection, are on the whole just the same to-day as they were in the cities of Assyria or Byzantium. Perhaps there was a face which I saw in the streets to-day which is the facsimile of some unknown face in the Memphis or Atlantis of the Past : was it not the very other day that an archæologist was startled to see a face in London, the exact replica of a face he had seen in some disinterred city—was it Herculaneum? Who knows if somebody in the far-off ages did not think the same thoughts that came to me as I saw the sun rise to-day out of the golden East, and paint that part of the sky with its crimson tinge and deck the clouds with vermillion hues?

This curiosity that turns our eyes towards the Past, however idle and superficial it may appear, is destined to forge new links between the dead and the living, across the abyss of ages, and to bring the past and the present into a closer relation than has yet been possible in this world. Then this backward-gazing spirit will seem no mere imaginative caprice, no idle sentiment, fit only to while away a half-hour or so and pleasant only to dreamers and lovers of moonshine ; but we shall learn to worship the Muse of Clio with homage and reverence, and to deck her golden temple with the offerings of genius and poetry. I shall name here some of the links that shall connect the buried Past with the living Present.

First comes the link of knowledge forged by the triple powers of the intellect that lies within the instincts of curiosity and wonder, the spirit that goes out everywhere in search of truth and reality in order to realise the eternal Self of the Universe, and the faith that believes that only in the utmost realism of knowledge is there any permanent safety for the world, that the great Reality that surrounds and upholds us must be the final law giver and the stern judge of all our individual thoughts and emotions, all our hopes and aspirations, all that we hold sacred and noble in ourselves : for though we ourselves are not banished beyond the pale of Truth, yet we are but its fragments, and a thousand times have we stumbled and grovelled when we have sought to walk regardless of anything beyond our private selves. So at least the spirit of philosophic prudence and a lofty realism will be busy in bridging over the gulf of centuries when curiosity and even the love of knowledge shall flag in their task. . . . What a vision shall then open out before our eyes ! What a mighty drama shall we see, of which we now know but a scene or two in a single Act !

Will there be no other connection between the past and ourselves? Will the spirit of truth and knowledge be our only guide to those dim and shadowy periods, and shall we find nothing in them but the dry bones of buried facts and the *hortus siccus* of a petrified garden? No,—not only the spirit of reality

but the spirit of beauty too has touched those far-off regions with his halo and glory. Ever and anon will our imagination flit over those dim-lighted realms in search of beauty and joy, and will sip thousands of nectarean fountains and refresh its wearied pinions over soft-blowing murmurous zephyrs; while a myriad delicate tints and sounds and odours will pour their balm over its langour-laden spirits The spirit of poetry will come in her visioned voyagings over these regions, and catch the wild and luxurious melody that rises from them like the fine, transparent shimmer that rises from hill-tops in the glare of the day. Other arts too will find inspiration in the beauty and sublimity of a vanished world, and thus contribute their share in the linking of the ages.

One more link there will be, the link of reverence and love. What a sanctity seems to hang around every ruin and relic of the past, every record and impress of the footsteps of Time! With what veneration does the world look upon the unearthed fragments of a buried past, and treasures them as a man treasures the pictures of his forefathers in his halls! For the past appears before us stript of that atmosphere of the commonplace which shrouds the objects of the present, and its soul stands before our vision enshrined in all its glory and loveliness, like some majestic mountain peak, that was concealed from our view so long, bursting upon our eyes in all its dazzling majesty and sublime grandeur. Let us stand in mute reverence before the Life and Truth that was when we were not born, the reality that drew its vitality from the mysterious abysses of Eternal life. We shall err if we look upon the Past simply as a step to the present, as a factory to manufacture the modern age. for it had a stability and a self-sufficiency of its own which we can but difficultly conceive: we miss the deep-seated and unruffled joy of the Absolute's self-realisation in every moment of history,—yet it is the unconscious perception of this solid experience of every age at the heart of the eternal flux and fusion, that kindles the sentiment of reverence at the magic touch of antiquity, and it is this reverence that makes it possible for us to come closer to the heart-beats of the ages than any theory of history or evolution can lead us. . . . And shall not love too entwine its silken threads round the aerial track of time till it reaches those dusky epochs? For the dead world too was peopled by men and women and children, who suffered and toiled, bled and cried with a real human anguish: they were less wise than ourselves, and suffered pains which we no longer suffer, for they suffered and bled *for us*, toiled and struggled for *our* emancipation, though unconsciously. Oh, the cry of sorrow and lamentation that rises— . . . what a pathos in those figures hard-pressed by destiny, suffering from their own mistakes, which we now see through clearly!—what a yearning lies entombed in those dusky pyramids, what a hope lies buried in

their scriptures, what beautiful sentiments gleam here and there through all the ruined antiquity ! Each age and each people has called itself the greatest and best—what a pathetic fate has engulfed all their beautiful pride and majestic self-reliance ! What pleasures and joys had they devised for themselves : beautiful gossamer-threads, glistening with the morning dew—alas, so fragile and transient ! They had their follies too, their dark sins and crimes, but they were led thither by a higher power than themselves, and those child-like generations had to feel the agony of the cross for the redemption of the future world. So let us not say that they were rightly served for their sins, but that the infant humanity suffered for *our* sake, though they knew it not—alas, the more is the pity. Yet they too tasted the joy and happiness of life, they too loved and worshipped, thought and felt nobly, wondered and aspired. Does not the man of the ancient past appear to us like some younger brother of ours, more ignorant and more wayward than his elders, girt about with greater elemental strength and greater weakness than ourselves, and full of strange beliefs and superstition ? Truly shall our connection with the past reach its consummation when it shall be crowned with our heart's sympathy and love.

K.

“ In the Study.”

ODE TO THE WEST WIND.

This magnificent lyric of Shelley is an exquisite example of the way in which Shelley's emotions received their impulse and colour and animation from the sights and sounds of Nature—how a wild and tempestuous evening could call forth in him the leaping passion of his “tameless, and swift, and proud” spirit, how the joyous exultation of the wild spirit of the tumultuous wind could be inwrought into fibres of the emotions which it kindled in the poet's heart.

The very spirit of the wild tempest rushes like a surging torrent through these lines—a swift and impetuous sweep, tameless and free, full of the sportive strength and exultation of the homeless storm : here and there soft-flowing and touched by a gentler and milder melody, which is whelmed and lost in the deep and awful music, the dirge-like antumnal blast of the restless and ever-wandering west wind. The poet's spirit, swift and passionate and desolate and wild like the west wind's, kindles at the touch of its impetuous rush and sweep, mounts and soars like the rising storm, and yet, all the while, we find a yearning endeavour, on the poet's part, to unite his being with that of the wind, by living through all its joys and caprices and wanderings, till he can hope to address it as a kindred spirit and a brother. In the first three stanzas, the poet

seeks thus to imbibe the life and soul of the wind till he can mingle himself in passionate union with its inmost being. In the emotional contemplation of the wind's sportive wanderings over the earth, through the sky, over the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, tracking its capricious path farther and farther into the past, he seeks to clasp this wild and fiery spirit. Then comes a break, a pause, and a sudden falling-off. This is the peculiar characteristic of Shelley's temperament.* The higher he soars and the more he seeks to grasp his lofty visions, the more he feels that he is not master of his own passion; like the wild sea-gull that is carried on the bosom of the sweeping tempest, and yet is too absorbed in the joy of swift motion to feel that he is the sport of the wind. The poet suddenly feels his own weakness in the presence of the elemental tempest, for the history of the wind's voyagings has raised a dim and vague half-remembrance of his own past, and revealed the gulf between them, the gulf that stands in the way of the full union for which he was striving, and had all but succeeded . . . In what spirit does he then address the West Wind, after this failure and falling-off? He comes out of his own private self, as it were, the self that had "fallen on the thorns of life and bled," whose phantom stood in the way of the union, and, if he retains anything of his past self, it is his own spirit in buoyant boyhood, which was too like the West Wind, its comrade and rival in swiftness and freedom—"tameless, and swift, and proud." He resigns the effort for union with the wind, and becomes passive and submissive to its stronger power: he invokes the 'spirit fierce' to be his own spirit: "Be thou me, impetuous one!" He will be the instrument of the tempest, the lyre on which it will make its melodies, the forest whose dead leaves of thought will be scattered over the world for a new quickening, a re-awakened spring in Humanity. Thus is effected, not the union which the poet longed for in the beginning, but an absorption of himself in the vaster power that blows around and through him, the wind of the universe,—and the lyric seems to end in an endless sighing of the eternal tempest, whose rush and sweep rustles through the infinite forest of the world: the only note of Shelly's voice that we catch as he is being absorbed and dissolved in this eternal rustle and sweep, is—

"O, Wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?"

which is the sweetest music in the whole poem.

I.

Let us try to study the poem a little more closely. At the end of the first stanza the west wind is invoked thus:

"Wild spirit, which art moving everywhere,
Destroyer and preserver; hear, O hear!"

* cf. the *Epipsychidion*.

In the first stanza both these aspects of the wild spirit, the destroying and the preserving, have been equally manifested. The west wind first appears to us as the destructive spirit of desolation and decay—the dead leaves, yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red, are driven before its unseen presence like ghosts fleeing from an enchanter: yet this same wild spirit also carries the seeds of future flowers and fruits on its bosom, as well as the flying leaves, to places where they shall burst, and blossom, and quicken plain and hill, when the spring ‘blows her clarion o’er the dreaming earth.’ Thus the west wind conceals the spirit of preservation and life within its wild ferocity and uncontrollable impetuosity.

II.

The poet next looks into the sky and sees the same spirit repeating its wild frolics amidst the clouds and congregated vapours—Heaven and Ocean form one vast forest, the loose clouds flying before the hurrying tempest are the leaves shaken down from its tangled boughs. Surely none but the daring and storm-uplifted spirit of Shelley could have conceived this image, wild and fantastic though it may appear to many. This image serves to connect this stanza with the first, and yet is free from any charge of being forced and far-fetched. For the spirit of the first scene—the forest swept by the west wind—breathes through the whole poem, and has entered into the inmost recesses of Shelley’s being. For the moment, nothing lives but an endless and hoary forest, through which an eternal tempest is surging and sweeping with uncontrollable power: the dim shapes of the phantom-world are merged in the shades of the forest-boughs as the noise and roar of that world mingle with the rustle and tumult of the forest trees. But Shelley is not content with merely repeating an old image in the present case. He must find something which is more akin to the passion of the moment, enabling to feel it more vividly and deeply. Like some fierce Mænad, with fiery and dishevelled locks, appears the savage and maniac spirit of the frenzied storm. Now the tempest abates its fury, and moans in its deep autumnal tone, like the dirge of the dying year; the clouds form the mourning pageant of the burial of the year; and this night is the closing dome of buried year’s sepulchre, “vaulted with all its congregated might of vapours.”

III.

Yet not always has the West Wind been so fierce and impetuous, or so tragic and funereal: when it passed over the Mediterranean, it awakened the blue sea from its slumbers and dreams—it disturbed the waves sleeping over sunk palaces and towers, all overgrown with azure moss and fairy flowers—a scene that would have tamed the ferocity of a less wild spirit. But in the Atlantic, the mighty Wind meets the mighty Ocean, and again the awful Destroyer appears

before us. The wide expanses of the ocean are cleft into chasms before its fiery speed, while, far below, the sea-blooms and the sapless foliage of the ocean recognise the tremendous voice, and shudder and grow grey with fear.

IV

Having traversed all the native elements of the West Wind, when the poet now returns to himself, expecting to find a harmony and closeness, a *rapprochement* established between the spirit of the wind and himself, he finds that it was the strength and freedom of the wind that he has mistaken for his own so long, and that he has fallen back on his weak and feeble self from this sudden ecstatic emotion, which seemed to infuse in him the nimble joy and the unchartered freedom of the sportive wind. For beside its elemental strength, Shelley is weak and fettered with human weakness and sadness : not weak like the dead leaf or the swift cloud or the yielding wave, for even these may share the strength of the tempest ; but weak with the consciousness of individual pain and sorrow, weak with the feeling of lost freedom and shattered pride of strength ; weak with the burden of a dark self-consciousness and the ruin of youthful visions, majestic dreams. ‘ Even if I could return to my boyhood, I would at least have shared thy swiftness and freedom, I would have found my soul in harmony with thine, and would not have prayed to thee as I am praying now. O thou that art strong—lift me who am chained and bowed and bleeding, but was once tameless and swift and proud like thee : Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud ! ’

Even as he prays he has been lifted from the dreary weakness which he found in himself, till, on the wings of prayer and aspiration, ever longing to merge his little individuality in the vastness of the spirit he is addressing, he rises and soars, renouncing all thought of his private self in a vision of a re-awakened humanity—a new-born angel blowing the trumpet of prophecy whose notes the West Wind carries on its wings to spread it far and wide, to every part of the slumbering world.

V.

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is :
What if my leaves are falling like its own !
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, spirit fierce
My spirit ! Be thou me, impetuous one !

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth !
And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth,
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind !
Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy ! O, wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind ?

This last stanza carries us to the central spot of Shelley's emotion. The west wind had kindled in him a formless longing, a dim, unrealised yearning for some larger life than the hour was yielding, of which the tempest seemed to bring him vague and distant suggestions. So long as he was not looking beyond his individual self, the wind seemed not to respond to his prayers and invocations, and the unshaped yearning seemed ever likely to hover like a mocking spectre before his eyes, when suddenly, even at the very moment of extreme bitterness and despair, the emancipation came, and the winged words leaped out of his tremulous lips :

" Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is ! "

Out of this abandonment rises a larger vision and a deeper emotion that he felt before. He will be the poet and prophet of the new Humanity that is to come. The deep-toned world-wind seems to sing the dirge of an ending cycle, and a death-like Winter will come upon the world, after which a new Spring will awaken, quickened and renewed by the blossoming of the long-neglected thoughts of the dead poet. A transfigured Humanity rises before his ken, enringed with the aureole of a new glory and radiance, risen from its dull and brutal slumber of ages by trumpet-peal of the poet's song, and a new rapture thrills and breaks through his voice as the vision of the prophet-poet comes to his distant-looking eyes.

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE INSTITUTE.

The annual meeting of the Calcutta University Institute was held on Thursday the 17th March, at 6 p.m., under the presidency of the Hon. Mr. S. P. Sinha. The Hall was crowded with members and friends of the Institute, among whom were the Hon. Mr. G. W. Kuchler, the Maharaja of Nasipur, Sir Gurudas Banerjee, the Hon. Mr. W. C. Macpherson, Mr. R. N. Mukerjee, C. I. E. Nawab A. F. M. Abdur Rahaman, the Hon. Mr. M. S. Dass, the Hon. Babu Bindindra Nath Bose, the Hon. Mr. Sachchidananda Sinha, the Hon. Mr. A. Earle, C. I. E., Prof. E. F. Oaten, Prof. T. S. Sterling, Prof. Jnanranjan Banerjee, Prof. Promothonath Banerjee, Hon. Babu Devaprasad Sarbadhikari, Mr. J. N. Banerjee, Babu Hirendra Nath Dutt, Prof. Radhakumud Mukerjee, Rev. W. S. Urquhart.

ANNUAL REPORT.

The report of the work of the Institute for the last year showed satisfactory progress. The year began with a reception of members of the Institute by Sir Edward Baker. While the Institute Committee submitted a respectful proposal to be allowed to send a deputation for presenting an address of hearty welcome to the new Lieutenant-Governor, His Honour preferred to have the Junior members of the Institute together with some of the Office-bearers as his guests at Belvedere. Two days later His Honour came to the Institute to preside at its annual meeting and gave an address which was full of sympathy and encouragement for its members.

His Honour expressed the wish that the number of Junior members might in the course of the year rise to 500. That wish has not been quite realized. But in December 1909, the number of Junior members on our roll was 414. The number of Senior members in 1909 was 174 as compared with 170 in the previous year.

The work of the Students' Fund has advanced fully in accordance with anticipations. A handsome donation of Rs. 50 from His Honour received just after the last annual meeting gave the impetus, and the Under-Secretary in charge of the Students' Fund, assisted by other members, worked very energetically to organize a charity performance of the Bengali play *Kurukshetra*,—the net proceeds of which amounting to about Rs. 230 have been credited to the Students' Fund.

Athletics.—The noteworthy acquisition in the Athletic Section has been the two fine boats, the gift of Mr. R. N. Mukerjee, C. I. E. The interest taken in boating has naturally been very great, and we have now more than 100 members who have joined the rowing club.

Literary Section.—In connection with the Literary Section, the usual Inter-collegiate Recitation Competitions continued to evoke great enthusiasm, competitors having appeared, in some of the subjects, even from distant mofussil colleges, such as Hughli and even Krishnagar. The performance of *Hamlet* which was given in the presence of our President, the Hon. Mr. W. C. Macpherson, showed a real grasp of a difficult play by the performers, and was very much appreciated by the audience. Amongst the noteworthy literary discourses given during the course of the year may be mentioned a paper on "Reminiscences of my Professors with a special reference to the late Mr. F. J. Rowe" and another on "A Comic History of English Literature" by Prof. Lalit Kumar Banerjee, a discourse on "Our Food Problem" with practical demonstrations and magic lantern illustrations, by Dr. Indumadhab Mullik, a very interesting discourse on "Music" with demonstrations by Professor Inayat Khan, a paper on "Words-

worth *vs.* Tennyson" read by Babu Panchanandas Mukerjee, and another on "Chittabikasa" by Babu Kulada Prosad Mullik, both read at Junior members' Debate meetings.

As regards the Library, the Committee have again to regret that a comparatively small sum (only Rs. 347-2-6) could be spent in the purchase and binding of books and periodicals.

General Section.—The activities in the general section were varied and were perhaps the foremost to engage the attention and interest of members. An entertainment, with short discourses, music, magic shows, etc., was provided for the Intermediate Standard students just when their University Examination was over. A cordial reception was given to the Hon. Mr. S. P. Sinha on his appointment as Law Member of the Imperial Council. The charity performances of *Kurukshetra* as already referred to were highly appreciated. The annual steamer trip, in which more than 300 Junior members and a fair number of Senior members joined, was a great success. The ordinary social gatherings with their varied programme including short discourses, as well as comic recitations, magic shows, etc., were very much appreciated. There were four memorial meetings, viz.—in honour of the late poet Nabin Chundra Sen, Mr. F. J. Rowe, Babu Dinesh Chandra Mitra, and Rai Bahadur Dr. Devendra Nath Roy, respectively.

Only recently the Hon. Mr. A. Earle, C. I. E., Chairman of the Corporation has unveiled the portrait of Mr. C. W. Bolton, C. S. I., who was for nine years President of the Institute, the portrait being a gift to the Institute of Prof. Hem Chunder Sarkar, and being the work of an Indian artist, Babu Ranoda Prasad Sen.

Memorial Prizes.—Four memorial prizes were offered for the year under review, with the following results:—

1. In connection with the Wilson memorial, two prizes were offered for the two best essays in English on "The Social and Literary condition of Bengal during the Moghul Period." Three essays were received in all; and on the recommendation of the Examiner—Professor Jadunath Sarkar, M. A., only one prize has been awarded to Jotindra Nath Sen, 3rd Year, Scottish Churches College.

2. The Mozoomdar memorial prize was offered for the best essay in Bengali on "The Need of Religious Life and the Means of Religious culture in Student Life. Eight essays were received; and on the recommendation of the Examiner—Professor Benoyendra Nath Sen M. A., the prize has been awarded to Premananda Sinha, 1st Year, City College.

3. The K. C. Banurji memorial prize was offered for the best essay in English on "The Hygiene of Student Life." Three essays were received, and

on the recommendation of the Examiner, Lieut. Col. U. N. Mukerjee, I M. S. the prize has been awarded to Bankim Chandra Sen Gupta, 3rd Year, Medical College.

Professor Lalit Kumar Banerji M. A., of the Bangabasi College very kindly offered a prize through the Institute in connection with the F. J. Rowe Memorial, for the best essay in Bengali on John Ruskin. Two essays were received, and on the recommendation of the Examiner, Prof. Lalit Kumar Banerji, the prize has been divided between Mohini Mohan Bhattacharyya of the Presidency College and Kshirode Chandra Maiti, Bangabasi College.

Present Needs.—The growth in our numbers and in our work has brought with it increased responsibilities, and it is felt that many improvements which are urgently called for cannot be effected unless the Institute gets additional help from Government and from the generous public. The amount of the present Government grant was fixed just when the Institute was started, about twenty years ago. The conditions of education in the country have immensely changed during that period, and the Government grant for educational institutions has been keeping pace with the growing needs. Shortly after our last annual meeting, our worthy President, the Hon'ble Mr. W. C. Macpherson C. S. I., whose deep interest in the Institute the Committee cannot be sufficiently thankful for, wrote in a note :

"I agree that it will be right and proper in view of the increase in our numbers to ask Government for an increased grant. It is a strong point that the existing grant was fixed so long ago."

THE HON'BLE MR. MACPHERSON'S SPEECH.

The Hon. Mr. W. C. Macpherson, in moving the adoption of the report, said that the increase in number of the junior members of the Institute was a satisfactory feature of the year's work. This, he attributed to the sympathy and encouragement given them by His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor, rather than to any material advantages afforded to members by the Institute, and even more to the increasing sense of *esprit de corps* of the students, a growing feeling of responsibility and co-operation on their part. In regard to their financial position, he said that Government helped those who helped themselves. Unfortunately, the present year was one of financial stringency, so far as the provincial finances were concerned. He thanked the Chairman for having presided over that meeting.

THE HON'BLE MR. KUCHLER'S SPEECH.

The Hon'ble Mr. Kuchler in seconding the adoption of the report said that the Institute was in many respects in a very satisfactory position, but as the Hon. Mr. Macpherson had said there was another side of the picture. There were many

things still, which ought to be done before the Institute could be said fully to carry out the purposes which it had in view. The chief difficulty he thought was the present insecurity of the tenure of the present building. Personally he thought that the best plan would be that the University should provide accommodation for the Institute, as was originally proposed at its new building. The Institute can make a direct reference to the University, asking to state distinctly whether it would be possible to accommodate the Institute within its walls. But whatever might be the decision of the University, he thought that the members of the Institute might rest assured that they would not be dispossessed of the present building unless something better or at least equally good could be found for them. Turning to the question of additional fittings, especially electric, he said that if the members came up with a carefully considered scheme for providing this hall with electrical fittings he was quite prepared to give such scheme a very careful consideration. Regarding the question of enhanced grants and the needs of the Institute he said that the Government grant to the Institute remained at its present figure while educational grants, generally speaking, had been increasing during the same period. Judging from the work that the Institute had been doing he said he would not be wrong in including the Institute under the head educational. He was perfectly willing as in the case of electrical fittings to consider any application which might be presented by the committee of the Institute. He did not think that it would be out of the way for the University to recognise the important part which the Institute plays in the daily life of University students.

The motion was supported by the Hon. Mr. Devaprasad Sarvadhikari.

DISTRIBUTION OF PRIZES.

On the call of the Hon. Mr. Bhupendra Nath Bose seconded by Rev. W. S. Urquhart, the Chairman distributed the medals and prizes to the successful competitors at the Inter-Collegiate Recitation Competitions, and for the Wilson, Mozoomdar, K. C. Banurji and Rowe Memorial prizes.

UNVEILING OF THE PORTRAIT OF THE LATE MR. K. C. BANURJI.

Sir Gurudas Banerjee, in requesting the Chairman to unveil the portrait of the late Mr. Kali Charan Banurji, described him as an unostentatious apostle of culture. He was a respected and scholarly teacher in the College hall, an orator and worker in the field of politics and an admirable preacher of God's message to the educated classes. It was impossible to enumerate his manifold good qualities.

Professor Benoyendra Nath Sen said that the late Mr. Kali Charan Banurji was "an apostle of the earnest life." He made earnest and penetrating appeals to his audiences that came from the soul. He would speak of vows and exhort young men to give pledges of temperance and self-consecration. He was marked by a broad catholicity of spirit; there was nothing sectarian about him. His culture was peculiarly spiritual, and was marked by sweetness and love combined with earnestness.

The Chairman then unveiled the portrait, the work of an Indian artist, Babu Bamapada Banerji, which was pronounced a good likeness of the late Mr. Banurji.

THE HON'BLE MR. S. P. SINHA'S SPEECH.

The Chairman said he considered it a special honour to be called on to unveil the portrait. The Hon. Mr. Macpherson had handed him a letter from the Lieutenant Governor wherein His Honor expressed regret at his inability to be present owing to pressure of work and wished the Institute a continuance of prosperity. He (the Chairman) had had the privilege of personal acquaintance with Mr. Banurji, since he joined the bar in 1886, and was associated with him for many years. From the period the speaker came to Calcutta as a young student, he learnt to admire the profound learning, the powerful eloquence, the childlike simplicity, and the deep piety of Mr. Kali Charan Banurji. To know him was to love him and the longer he knew Mr Banurji the greater was his admiration for him. Gifted with rare powers of eloquence which were enhanced by a charming personality, genial manners and a silvery voice, his services were always at the command of his countrymen. He knew of no one among his countrymen who had done greater services in the cause of the material, moral, religious, and social progress of his country. The great moral that the speaker learnt from the life of Mr. Banurji was that mere difference in religion was no difference at all.

ADVICE TO STUDENTS.

He had been asked by his friend the Hon Mr. Macpherson to address a few words of advice to the students. There was of late no lack of advice to students and teachers, and in taking upon himself the role of adviser, he feared that his sentiments might appear to conflict with the advice that had been offered before. He would content himself with saying that he was not one of those who believed that there had been any change in the minds or temper or temperament of the student community in these days. There had no doubt been criminal aberrations due to temporary causes, but they were well on their way to removal. Even at the risk of being called a blind optimist—he preferred to be called that rather than an ignorant pessimist—he would say that these aberrations had been partly removed already and he hoped and trusted that in the immediate future there

would be a return to normal conditions. He urged them to remove that stain which was a disgrace on their fair name. He lamented the want of touch between the students and European professors. In conclusion he offered the management of the Institute a sum of Rs. 500 to be utilised for its benefit.

Nawab Abdur Rahaman proposed a vote of thanks to the Chairman which was seconded by the Maharaja of Nashipur and one of the junior members, and passed with acclamation.

THE BELVEDERE GARDEN PARTY.

(From the Statesman.)

The spacious grounds of Belvedere were looking their best yesterday afternoon, when about three hundred junior members of the Calcutta University Institute were entertained at a Garden party by His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor and Lady Baker. The guests included Mr. Justice Mukherjee, Sir Gurudas Banerjee, the Hon. Mr. W. C. Macpherson, Mr. Gourlay, the Raja of Nashipur, Professor and Mrs. Wordsworth, Nawab Abdur Rahaman, Dr. P. K. Roy, and Professor Benoyendra Nath Sen. The students as they came up were received by Sir Edward and Lady Baker, who with Captain Allanson were indefatigable in their attention to the young men, and displayed a happy knack of making every one of them feel quite at home. Tea was separately laid out in two large marquees, the orthodox guests being treated to Hindu refreshments with due regard to their caste restrictions, and a band hidden away under a bower played selections of music.

A short but amusing programme of gymkhana events was gone through, the diving for the apple and the race round a double row of chairs which was run when the band played music and discontinued as often as the strains ceased, affording especial merriment to those present. In between the events the guests walked about admiring the beautiful lawn, or retired to the tents to discuss tea and sweetmeats. At the conclusion of the sports, Lady Baker gave away prize consisting of hand cameras, fountain pens, steel trunks, cash boxes, etc. to the successful competitors. Three lusty cheers were called for Lady Baker and His Honor, and were heartily responded to by the students, and on the call of Sir Edward, cheers were accorded to the University Institute.

The following is the list of the events and the prize winners :—

SACK RACE.—Competitors to run about 100 yards tied up in a sack, arms to be inside the sack.—1. Jugal Krishna Ghose. 2. Sailesh Chunder Banerjee.

Diving for Apples.—Competitors run with their hands tied behind their backs up to a bucket of water in which apples are floating. The first competitor who returns with an apple in his mouth wins.—1. Jotindra Nath Mitter. 2. Suresh Chandra Chakravarti 3. Jiban Krishna Roy.

Hurdle Race.—Competitors to run about 80 yards over five small hurdles, carrying a ghurra full of water held on their heads with one hand only.—1. Nirmal Chandra Gupta. 2. Ajit Kumar Banerjea.

Musical Chairs.—1. Jotindra Nath Mitter. 2. Romesh Chandra Bose.

It was announced that a further prize would be given for the wittiest written account of the afternoon's proceedings, to be sent in by Monday, the 14th of March, to Belvedere.

The following is the account to which the first prize has been awarded by His Honour

TO THE AIDE-DE-CAMP, BELVEDERE.

Sir,

Here is the account of the proceedings of the 10th March.

* * * * *

The proceedings began with the procession of amateur nuns. The process by which the junior members of the Institute were metamorphosed has escaped from my memory.

Perhaps it was something like this. Some hundred or so of the members were given the sack. I don't mean exactly that. They were simply thrust inside of sacks in the way they take cabbages to the market place, with their roots,—I mean their other extremity—their polar appendages, protruding out. On a given signal, they started. It was a treat to see the whole platoon of amateur nuns—the animated productions of the Calcutta Jute Mills—come charging down like Furies; dozens of them brought up in a mass at every ten paces and all finally went floundering down on the lawn, with an unanimity of sentiment truly remarkable.

The second event of the day was diving for apples; though the last named commodity, as seen that day, resembled ordinary oranges to an incredible extent. But then appearances are always deceitful. As to the feat itself, it was easier dragging a cat out of an ash-hole by the tail. Some of my friends with a suicidal turn of mind took part in it. I told them they stood a very good chance of getting drowned. They tried various devices for picking up the apple. I warned some of my friends with long ears, that with those long-legged, lantern jawed, unprepossessing-looking spectres, they stood no chance. I reminded them, that it was not a competition for the comparative length of the "handsome volutes to the human capital" as Lamb has it. It came true. The spectres with jaws that would kill a whale out of very shame, arrived first. Well, they could carry half-a-dozen buckets of water, not to say of oranges.

The next event, the event of the day, was performed within the shamianas. His Honour always wants to do good by stealth and that is why there was no mention of it in the Gymkhana events. All participated in it heartily, though no prizes were offered. Being crowded out, I was obliged to be a spectator, instead of a partaker. The junior members were all attention to themselves. They ate like condemned men having their last feed on earth, before the execution. After finishing they sallied out of the shamianas with the majestic move-

ments of well-laden merchantmen. I don't know their actual tonnage, but to hazard a guess, they could not be under a thousand ton. While others, whose personal appearance would by no means warrant their taking so much cargo, stored so much in, that it is more a matter of wonder than surprise how they managed to put that in. I confess, I am a little confused over the phenomena. I am pondering over it though. Well, I have come to this at last, that either they must have additional pouches like the kangaroo, or—or—shall I give it out—or they are three deckers in disguise. Else how could they lay both the stalls under contribution and take hot tea and cold drinks at the same time and not get the pneumonia? I trust, these three-deckers are not in His Majesty's service. They are only privateers.

At last when the crowd had thinned a little to allow me within a foot of the refreshment table, somebody came and notified that the next event was going to take place. I said, I did not take any interest in the event at a time like this, but another persecutor came and then another and finally believing that the general enthusiasm would permit nobody to help himself at ease, I reluctantly left the table letting down a cup of tea (Moore's by the flavour) by the way of overture and swallowing the bigger half of a well-sized cake by way of consolation. It somewhat soothed my ruffled feelings and effectively prevented my stifled sobs in embryo. I went out to see the hurdle race but could not believe my senses, when a very tame sight, common of an evening in any village in Bengal, met my eyes. I refer to the procession of old maids to the village tank for filling up their "ghurras." But the difference soon became uncomfortably evident to the competitors. On clearing the first hurdle, almost everybody who was worth anything contrived to break the "ghuria" over his head and had a free bath. After the event the majority of the competitors looked something like drowned cats while the winners resembled the Knights of the Caterwalling Order in the respect that they had more merits than their personal appearance would seem to indicate.

Those gentlemen competitors who all on a sudden developed a wonderful attachment to the "green felicity" of His Honor's lawn should be given a fair chance of cultivating that high and elevating instinct but ought to be directed, as Milton says, "to fresh fields and pastures new."

As put down on the programme the fourth event was Musical Chairs. I thought that the chairs would discourse music but found that real Musical Chairs were as scarce as lawyers in heaven. 'Musical Chairs' is a misnomer. Considering the free fight that ensued for the chairs, the event ought to go by the name of Fighting Chairs.

The distribution of prizes ended, as all such distribution ends, in cheers. But when it was taking place, some of the company made a suspicious move towards the shamianas. I had a notion, followed them up and found them wisely helping themselves again.

By the way, the cigarettes ran short—terribly short, though they were supplied in abundance. The reason is, I am afraid, we had amongst us an economist, a calculator and a swadeshi trader into the bargain. I am fairly on his track and would scalp him yet. He it was who calculating that the tobacco tax would inevitably raise the price of the article took stock of all the available supply and decamped.

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THOUGHTS AND OBSERVATIONS.

IT is an unmistakable fact that India is yet a long distance behind the modern world. Whatever may have been her intellectual position in the past, and whatever may be said about the forces of Rationalism found in our midst, it can be fairly said that we are even now almost immersed in Mediævalism, and this Mediævalism has yet a singularly strong hold on the country. By far the greatest portion of the country habitually live in a mental atmosphere where even the faintest streaks of rationalism and free thought cannot penetrate; and a large part of the educated community have hardly advanced an appreciable distance from the old moorings; we have not yet learnt to adapt our outlook and perspective to the modern era, and we have not the mental breadth and wholeness and elasticity to transfer the old focus of vision to the newer and richer centre, and to look with the eyes of the wide world in which we live. It is true that India had the highest intellectual and spiritual vision in the past, but this does not mean that this vision will remain the highest for ever, or that it was irreproachably perfect. Let us not forget that truth is the monopoly of no nation or country, however fortunate or gifted in diverse directions, or that what appears perfect today will appear narrow and one-sided to-morrow. Nor let us deceive ourselves with the old-world belief that since European thought and civilisation shows no stability and repose, but is ever changing and breaking up into dissolution or new forms, and since the ancient civilisation of our land has preserved a quiet existence through the tumult of centuries, it necessarily follows that we stand on a superior platform. Without quarrelling with the oft-repeated conclusion, it may be shown that the premises are crude and illusory. For is it not a law of Nature that the higher and the more complex

the organisation, and the finer and the richer the texture of an evolving organism, the greater is the tendency to break up and dissolve, and the quicker and the more accelerated are the changes and the new developments it undergoes? I have a larger optimism than many, and I have not the clear-visioned faith that pronounces the prophetic sentence of doom over a large and intensely vigorous civilisation, seeing in it but a rotten core and a dissolving fabric, and having the clairvoyance of a new Indian civilisation rising in all her pristine glory over the desolate ruins of the western world.

* * *

It is perhaps easy to find in the above paragraph ample proof of 'denationalisation' of the writer and a frenzied intoxication about the occidental civilisation, which even western thinkers are not slow to condemn. Yet we shall venture to go back to the observation that a Mediævalism which is behind the times is still lingering amongst us. To a large extent this is due to the stereotyped cast of our popular religion, permeating and circumscribing our social structure even in those places where perhaps a little freedom was desirable, and overburdening and shackling the life of the individual in such a manner as to leave hardly any time or room for free and original thought and action. It is a lesson of history that no high culture or realisation can be left as a permanent legacy to posterity, unless care be taken, at every fresh epoch when a new readjustment of the mental world is necessitated, to reorganise the old culture, to realise anew the old realisation, to revitalise the old currents of life and thought. India knew this profound truth, and has applied this law to her ancient culture more successfully, more consciously and more often than other countries, whenever such a course has become necessary. But to-day it seems as if India is making unnecessary delay in acting once more according to her mighty traditions, and has become hide-bound in the forms and lifeless details of a former epoch. The remedy lies in the hands of the upper classes, but even these have not been able, as yet, to adjust their mental horizons to the new world that has broken upon us and overwhelmed our wonted peace. The first glare that dazzled our eyes attracted us as the lamp draws the moth; but there were voices calling us to return: these two forces have roused us from our drowsy hallucinations, and we are waiting for the result with expectant hearts. The greater Bharatvarsha is yet to come.

In the past, India lived much in the abstract, metaphysical and mystical domains of thought. We find less of personal and passionate elements in the history of India's inner life than in Europe. We do not find the aggressive, assimilative spirit of the west, but a serene and reflective spirit, to which not to do, not to work, but to be, to realise, is the highest ideal of life. We do not find the soldier, the conqueror, but the philosopher: not the fire that gives you life and warmth, but the light that yields you joy and illumination. What India requires to-day is a proper sense of the concrete and the real, instead of the abstract way of looking at them, and a consciousness of her organic position in the world of which she forms so large a part. She requires, and the world requires, to feel the chords and channels which bind the two together, in order that she may no longer continue the dry and soulless life, which, like a brooding spectre, is sitting on her heart, slowly sucking out her life-blood. She requires, and the world requires, that the hot effervescence raised by the union of two separate world-elements pass away without a conflagration, and a newer and larger life dawn on our benighted horizons, stronger, profounder, richer and more ample than the old skies have yielded us.

THE PASSING OF KING EDWARD.

The passing of King Edward came as a sudden shock, and sent a thrill of common sorrow throughout the whole civilized world. No other event that can be thought of could have produced the same effect. Throughout the vast British Empire itself it roused a vibration of sorrow, of sympathy, of a spontaneous overflow of loyalty which made the Empire feel the quick pulsation of a common life, suddenly lifted into a purer, holier atmosphere.

"O Loyal to the royal in thyself,
And loyal to thy land, as this to thee"—

So wrote the Poet Laureate about the great Queen-Empress whose memory shall be ever sacred. And these are the words that come to one's mind as one thinks of the last occasion of the Empire's mourning. They remind one that loyalty is a sacred, an ennobling sentiment which makes lustrous the soul of a Queen or a King as much as that of a subject. Taken in this light, the last occasion of imperial mourning has indeed been made lustrous by this sentiment of loyalty. If

India has been passing under a cloud of late, that cloud could not have been lifted more gloriously than it has been on this occasion. The tribute of the people from every other part of the Empire has been equally spontaneous, and deep-felt. But what is to be specially noted on the present occasion is that this demonstration of loyalty on the part of the people has been called forth by and has mingled into a continuous stream with what is perhaps a higher loyalty on the other side. The heroic self-devotion to duty of King Edward even in his last moments, the declaration and message of the new King-Emperor, the soul-touching message of the Queen-Mother,—each is filled with a lustre of its own which elevates the mind to contemplate. The whole occasion in fact presents a spectacle in which there is nothing which is not elevating and grand, not simply because it embraces the largest empire the world has ever seen, but in the highest moral sense,—a spectacle, unique and unparalleled, which history will be proud to record.

The secret of all this is to be found in the intensely interesting human element which Victoria the Good introduced into the royal family of England. Since her time, the education, training, marriage, travels, discharge of public functions and duties, of the Heir-apparent, have all been strictly regulated with a distinct purpose. Speaking of King Edward, the Prime Minister said : "He was the greatest constitutional King the world has ever seen. He simply gloried in the limitations of the Kingly power imposed by the constitution." A still better insight perhaps is gained from a description which holds him up as "The King in the Man exactly combined with the Man in the King." And so he was at home everywhere,—in his own court as well as in foreign courts, amongst the homeliest of his own people as well as amongst those abroad. His early home life, his life in the universities, his later public life had all been directed towards this end,—to seek and find the touch of the human heart everywhere. And so it was not an accident that he represented in very deed the Heart of the Empire, and that he shall be known in history as Edward the world's Peace-maker.

May the spirit of Victoria the Good in this matter continue for ever,—in England, in the British Empire, in all the empires and kingdoms and commonwealths of the world ! For what is politics,—

home politics, imperial politics, or world-politics—without heart? If the tendency of democracy is to make government impersonal, the greater is the need that somewhere, in some person there should be a strong embodiment of the human heart, specially trained to think and feel for millions, to mingle the charm of love with the rigor of the law in the administration,—to throw oil over troubled waters, to smooth down the sands that get mixed up with the oil in the machinery, to soothe with a word of kindness the sufferings of war or plague or famine. The remark that Bagehot somewhere makes about the education of a constitutional prince being likely to be neglected is now out of date. And in the tactful, noble-hearted King-Emperor whom we have just lost, we had an illustration of what education can do even for the highest office in the Empire, and it is further a guarantee that the same phenomenon shall continue from generation to generation.

Striking indeed was the human interest in the life of the late King-Emperor. Amongst the many noteworthy pictures given by the illustrated papers during the last few weeks, there is one with a peculiar pathos of its own showing in successive groups the various funerals that King-Edward attended during his lifetime. Amongst these again the most touching perhaps is the one showing the King attending the funeral service of his own eldest born. In that beautiful little chapel of Windsor, with so many happy and mournful associations, where recently the prayers went forth and the solemn hymns were sung over his own remains, there stands foremost in the mourning group the figure of the late King, stricken down by sorrow, but resigned and peaceful, and of what was going on in his heart, the following words written by him to the Archbishop of Canterbury may be taken as the expression: "The ways of the Almighty are inscrutable, and it is not for us to murmur, as He does all for the best—and our beloved son is far happier now than if he were exposed to the miseries and temptations of this world. We have also a consolation in the sympathy not only of our friends, but of all classes. God's will be done!" There was nothing sombre or morose to cast a shade upon King Edward's genial temperament and universal social sympathies, but his was a heart that had been chastened and softened and sweetened by affliction and sorrow, nobly felt and endured, with faith and loving resignation.

He had crossed the seas to set his foot upon Indian soil and know her people by sight. He had mingled his own genial sympathy in the

message he sent to her princes and her masses. And deep has been India's sorrow, and most spontaneous her demonstration of loyalty on this mournful occasion. Happily the same may be said about His Gracious Majesty the present King-Emperor also. His heart also is full of a "larger sympathy" for India, and his messages too have been gracious and encouraging. May India respond by making a strenuous, whole-hearted effort to rise to the call of the occasion, when she prays to God that the soul of the great Peace-maker may rest in peace, and the reign of the new King-Emperor may be peaceful and prosperous!

TO MISS TORU DUTT.

I.

Now she sleepeth angel maiden,
All her singing now is done,
Lips with heavenly fire laden
Are now silent dust in urn :
She is now in spirit preaching
Poets' laurelled pride to warn.

II.

Softly, speak not near that grave-stone,
Drop there but one natural tear,
There the rosebud ere 'twas half-blown
Drooped with tints yet fresh and clear,
Ere the hot winds breathed upon it,
Ere the moths its leaves could tear.

III.

O, she was too sweet to longer
Last in this dim vale of tears,
She now lies on a Hand stronger,
She now angel voices hears,
Round her now no earthy matter,
Now no clayey frame adheres.

IV.

Cased in a shell too too fragile,
Soul of pearl serene and bright !
O, the world could never thee 'guile
Or could stain thy maiden white ;
Thou, as is the sun-kissed rainbow,
Art dissolved in heavenly light.

V.

Sphered in maiden meditation,
Paradise of golden dreams,
Beauty beyond all expression,
As her purity beseems ;
In her eyes a golden vision,
On her brow the heavenly gleams !

VI.

O, the music of thy blest life
Echoed in thy sweet, sweet song,
Skylark-pinioned thou didst strive
Toward's the sphere of sunlight strong ;
On thy wings thou rained'st thy music,
Ay, were it a bit more long !

VII.

But perhaps 'twas all the sweeter,
For the bud was not full-blown !
Few were here to hear her, greet her,
Like the lark she sang alone ;
And when finished was her warbling
In the nest she sank an-on.

VIII.

Smelling of the Indian grasses,
Indian winds from southern seas,
(After an Indian shower passes)
Stealing scents from weeping trees,
Or the beauty wearing of the
Dawn that comes on wings of breeze.

IX.

I can feel in her sweet verses
Soul-throb of a maiden will,—
Ardour half that word rehearses,
Half that sympathy may feel,
Ardour into which the whole soul
Doth full-cadenced ring and thrill.

X.

Man could ne'er have sung so tender—
Over-hear we in her strain
Heart of woman singing,—mend her
That note will not ring again ;
Woman-heart, ay, woman-heart 'tis,
Singing now in joy, now pain.

XI.

O, the blushing maiden sweetness
Fragrant in her every line,
Music full in its completeness
Breathes through it without decline—
Scent of cedars, rain-moist earth, and
Dying leaves and fresh-drawn wine.

XII.

Blossom of an hour frost-bitten,
Dream that stayed an hour of sleep,
Dew-drop tender, O, sun-smitten,
Memory o'er which aye to weep,
Heavenly Hand before the harvest
Ripened in the field did reap.

XIII.

O, the cypress and the willow
Are now waving over thee,
Lap of mother-earth thy pillow,
Dying turfs now cover thee ;
In the silence of the grave-yard
Closed thy song in ecstasy.

XIV.

Withered in the heat of frenzy
 Tingling thy sensitive brain,
 Earthly life receded from thee
 With its plaited joy and pain,
 As thou orb'd in light celestial
 In the coffin wast low lain ;
 Phoenix, in the flame self-lighted
 O, precocious maid, art slain !

Written, April, 4, 1910.

SUKUMAR DUTT.

5th year class, Presidency College.

MY FIRST COMET *

' Full many a comet of purest ray serene
 The dark unfathom'd waves of ether hold
 And oft of one expanse had I been told
 That deep-browed *Halley* rules as his demesne.'

' Breathes there the man,' whose heart doth not leap up when he beholds a comet in the sky ? If such there breathe, I beseech thee, reader, to mark him well, so as not to make any mistakes. I am none of the sleep-loving cold-blooded fraternity. Long before its appearance, I remember to have read with deep interest all newspaper notices concerning the coming comet. In the excited condition of my imagination, I out-Gibboned Gibbons, and fancied Halley riding on the tail of *his* comet, (like the witches of old, who were supposed to indulge in nocturnal rides on horses of broom) and rushing with break-neck speed towards the earth, to show off his *property* to the astonished world ; and I shall always remember the night (how can I ever forget it, as the Prince of Denmark said to his father's ghost ?) when, 'all bright and glittering in the smokeless air' this 'wondrous blaze' dazzled my eyes and inspired me with a thorough belief in the joys of *early* rising.

This *summum bonum* of those days was attained in the first week of May, and not earlier, through my gluttonous habit of partaking too freely of 'great Nature's second course' ; for notwithstanding all determinations to the contrary, a slumber was sure to seal my spirits in the early hours of the morning. Exasperated at last by the triumphant narrations of fortunate *Seekers*, I made a solemn resolution to 'awake, arise or be for ever fallen' ; and with this end in view instantly procured and adjusted an alarm-clock, guaranteed to rouse the whole household.

* The Comet of January, reader, was a veritable, Wordsworthian Cuckoo to many of us,—
 'an invisible thing, a mystery,' 'still longed for, never seen' ; for this our best thanks are due to the smoke of Calcutta factories.

I was in the midst of a magnificent dream in which I found myself in the comet, lunching with Halley on a piece of roast meteor, sipping nebula, and listening all the while to his wonderful discourse about the belt of Saturn (of which he seemed to be mortally afraid) when I was rudely aroused by the horrid clang of that Dooms-day machine. Stopping its mouth instantly, I went to the eastern window and opened it. Good Halley! 'is yon red thing the—?' or is it but the elder brother of the dagger which presented itself to the vision of Macbeth? Bethinking myself however of the established modes of procedure in such doubts, I rubbed the eyes, pinched the body and came to the conclusion that the thing which 'flashed upon my eye' was indeed *the* comet. *Eureka*: I 'gazed and gazed'—for how long I can't say,

'Breathing with such suppression of the heart
As joy delights in'—

while 'Aurora's harbinger' went on brightening unheeded, unnoticed,—for what was the brightest star by the side of this 'phantom of delight' 'apparelled in celestial light' and winging the blue deep 'like a cloud of fire'?

* * * * * *

Come back into memory, like as thou wert when thou used to appear in the east with hope of a fiery column before thee,—for then thou wert a promise of beauty and it was in those days that thou didst shine at thy best. A *smoky* affair was thy transit, beginning in the smoking of panes of glass and ending in smoke: and when later on thou appeared 'st as an evening star,—bless thee comet, bless thee, thou wert 'translated'! For then thy star grew dimmer, thy tail then shrunk—————.

But for some subtle reason, man cannot behold thy tail without emotion. All sorts of mischief have been laid at thy door, and from time immemorial thou hast been regarded as a precursor of ruin, a 'bird of evil presage', foretelling, like the heard of Hudibras, 'the fall of sceptres and of crowns.' Thou hast been held responsible for the destruction of Jerusalem when thou wert seen to hover like a sword above the doomed city; thou art said to have blazed forth the fall of the last Saxon king and to have led on the barbaric host that poured into Italy under Attila. 'Excellent foppery of the world'! A martyr thou art to the superstition of man,—my heart weeps for thee!

'Pilgrim of the sky' 'trailing cloud of glory' and skimming through space, alone and unfriended like the famous *Traveller*!—how often have I stood still, entranced with admiration, while weighing the disproportion between thy body and tail! with what relish, reader, I once beheld two comet-gazing sweepers collide and belabour each other with the comets in their hands! 'But oh the heavy

change' ! *Transiit gloria mundi* ; it is gone and with it is extinguished the glory of the horizon. With it is gone, that spirit of exalted astronomy which kindled our bosoms and transformed us into incipient Herschels and Galileos ; the unbought use of binoculars, the cheap manufacture of alarm-clocks, the nurse of manly sentiment and poetic enterprise is gone ! 'There hath passed away a glory from the earth'

S K. II.

ANALYSIS OF LAUGHTER.

Of the many definitions of Man which have been handed down to us from the days of Socrates, none is more befitting than that which describes him as a laughing animal. As scientists aver, no other animal has rationality enough to be capable of laughing and this pleasant and pre-eminently rational act serves for the true differentium' that marks out the species Man from the genus Animal. Laughter is a very common thing among mankind. It is heard at the market-place, by the fireside, behind the counter, in the class-room and even in imperial council chambers and in temples of justice. It is sometimes quite amusing, sometimes delightful, sometimes sarcastic and sometimes, as the Autocrat of the Breakfast Table points out with punning ingenuity, man's laughter may be as criminal as manslaughter. Familiarity with laughter has indeed bred such contempt in us that we hardly ever deem it a serious subject to waste even a moment's thought upon. But in reality there is nothing in the world so composite and mysterious as the pleasant lightning of the teeth and the merry thunder of laughter that we meet with every day and every hour of life

The subject is in fact so important that I do not consider myself intellectually equipped enough to be able to handle it anything like satisfactorily. I shall therefore stop here with relating a pleasant incident that came in my way and which directed my thoughts to this interesting subject which I consider to be at the same time a very fruitful one.

Passing by the *Maidan* one afternoon after a tremendously prolonged examination had quite bowed me low, I happened to espy a number of children playing at cricket on a turf. Although not habitually a lover of sports, I could not resist the temptation of watching the happy Liliputians at their childish dissipation. I had not stayed more than a half hour looking on with amused interest, when an old, bilious lady with a super-abundance of obesity and clothing happened to come in that direction. Being of considerable avoirdupois, she was passing with a tardiness of locomotion that would invite comparison with Wordsworth's "summer cloud," when, to my horror whiz, came

the cricket ball like the bullet of a Martini, and struck her on the face. "O, heaven," shrieked the injured lady, "that had hit me full on the nose;" and I was sure that the blow would have grounded her had she been of a less substantial build.

I turned reprovingly towards the young cricketeers and expected to see them hang their heads in salutary shame. But the brazen-faced rascals did nothing of the sort and I perceived the rage among the eleven on the bowling side waxed intense. Not being acquainted with the mysteries of the game, I was looking wonderingly at them, when one impudent, young rogue turned up, and throwing up his hands tragically, addressed the lady in an excited voice, "Wot, a bloomin' shame! Only for your nose that would ha' bin a rounder!" Thereon I could not preserve the dignified look of reproof I was preparing to turn upon the offending urchins and "my lungs began to crow like a chanticleer." The incident made me feel merry all over my way back home, but when my more serious vein supervened, I gravely asked myself, what was it that had raised my laughter in the episode? Being of a speculative bent of mind, I sat down to seriously brood over the question and discovered that there were five distinct elements that had contributed to exciting my risibility. I intend to give below the result of my analysis with short commentary under each head.

First, the tragical attitude of the lady and the redoubtable cricketeers was undoubtedly a considerable factor. Whatever strikes us as out of the common may roughly be said to have a tendency to excite laughter. And when the extraordinariness is so palpable as to strike the eye or the ear, the excitation becomes inevitable, although of course we may bring in our refined reason to keep it in check. It may be heartless to laugh at a cripple or a haunch-backed beggar, but here also there is no denying it is but unrefined nature at work.

Secondly, the manner in which the remark was made also contributed to the ludicrousness of the incident. If the unchin had said in the chastest of King's English, "Madam, it was really shameful of you to intercept the ball with your nasal organ which would otherwise surely have been a glorious rounder," we should not have felt so greatly inclined to laughter. But the ring of unreserved frankness about the unconventional remark was a distinctly humorous element. Most jokes lose their point when translated into literary English and a certain amount of crudeness of expression and unconvictionality is often the great virtue of a successful joke.

Thirdly, the contrasted feelings in the minds of the offending and the offended parties. A sudden contrast often excites our laughter as shown in the joke, which I take from the Tit-bits, in which a certain rich, but rather silly young man in reply to the question put by his lady love's father,

"What grounds have you to consider that my daughter loves you?" replied with great unction, "Thirty acres, sir, in this parish and as many in the next." In the incident referred to previously the sharp contrast between the feelings of the old lady and those of the youngsters was similarly ludicrous.

Fourthly, the want of a sense of proportion in the mind of the impudent cricketers for whom the aberration of the cricket ball was of greater consequence than the damage to the old lady's olfactories. The following conversation of which the humorous point is the want of a sense of proportion may be parallelly cited :—

"Do you think, Thomson, I am a very heartless father and brutally indifferent to my children?"

"Surely not, Dick, you are quite the contrary."

"And do you think I'm so selfish I would not disturb or exert myself to secure their safety from the most desperate danger?"

"By jove, I have hardly seen a more affectionate father than you: Who could be accusing you of all this?"

"My wife." "Your wife? why? what could be the matter, good gracious?"

"Well, little Johnny got himself lost for a couple of hours the other day and all I did was to notify the police, hire every private detective in the town, and rouse all the neighbours to help hunt for him."

"Wasn't that more than enough?"

"No. She insists that I am a brutal selfish miscreant and several other things, because I refused to do all she wanted me to."

"By heaven, what more was possible?"

"Ay, my wife urged me to make the commander-in-chief order out the militia to help in the hunt."

Now fifthly and lastly, the one-sidedness of the little cricketers also contributed to excite my risibility. They could view the matter only from the stand point of its effect on their game and they contemptuously ignored the possibility of another point of view from which the injured lady might also regard the incident. It is this one-sidedness which often makes an extreme enthusiast or a scientific faddist ludicrous in the public eye.

I do not by any means suggest that these five elements alone exhaust the composition of the most composite thing—my laughter on the said occasion. I ask the readers of this magazine to find out if there were any other subtler elements in it and I am quite sure the intellectual exercise involved in such an analysis will pay. It would be very interesting indeed if we all analysed our laughs to the redound to be sure of immunity from the risk of laughing stupidly or awkwardly in society or at home.

THE EMPIRE'S FAREWELL.

(From the Truth.)

Historic Hall, by Rufus reared,
 With old traditions hedged around,
 Where Justice erst in state appeared,
 Where England's warrior Kings were crowned—
 What sights and sounds were yours to teach,
 If but your silent walls had speech !

You scanned that grim, impressive scene
 When Charles before his judges came ;
 You marked in him the hero's mien
 That half-redeemed the tyrant's fame ;
 Perchance to ruth your stones were stirred
 As you the fatal sentence heard.

Once more, when Hastings stood arraigned,
 You gazed upon that brilliant throng,
 Who wept with pity unrestrained
 To hear the tale of India's wrong ;
 With Britain's beauty, fashion, rank,
 The magic flow of Burke you drank.

Far other scenes are yours to day ;
 No Bradshaw scowls, no Burke enthralls ;
 A solemn silence holdeth sway
 Within your grey ancestral walls—
 Mute, yet with eloquence endowed,
 The silence of a stricken crowd.

What brings them here ? Some pageant brave,
 With pomp and circumstance galore ?
 A coffin, furnished for the grave,
 A simple thing of oak—no more.
 Yet, ah ! For what that coffin stands,
 To half a hundred divers lands !

Where India's tropic welkin glows ;
 Where proud Australia lifts her head ;
 Where lies Our Lady of the Snows,
 From Ocean unto Ocean spread ;
 Where Briton, Boer, and Kaffir own
 The kinship of a common Throne—

They come, of every creed and race,
 In spirit to this Mother Isle,
 Seek with her sons the sacred place,
 And sadly past yon coffin file.
 Broods over all a solemn spell.
 It is the Empire's last farewell.

Farewell to whom ? To him whose name
 Linked in one whole each several part ;
 In whom all sons had equal claim,
 And shared alike the father's heart ;
 Who stood, removed from racial strife,
 The emblem of our blended life.

Fond, futile schemes some statesmen scheme,
 To whom Utopia's spirit calls,
 And of a federal Empire dream,
 Fenced round with legislative walls,
 Within whose limits every soul
 Shall bow, enforced, to one control.

He saw, methinks, with saner eyes,
 The things that serve an Empire's cause,
 If one, 'tis by affection's ties ;
 You cannot make it one by laws ;
 Love stands, *it* stands ; Love falls, *it* falls ;
 It scoffs at politicians' walls.

For this he toiled, for this he schemed,
 To make his Empire one indeed ;
 While barren dreams the dreamers dreamed,
 The workman sowed the fertile seed.
 And who shall say his toil was vain
 That now beholds the ripening grain ?

'Tis fitting here he lie awhile,
 Where all their last respects may pay,
 Ere in St. George's stately pile
 His earthly dust to dust they lay—
 Should still, as when the light he saw,
 All men, all ranks, together draw.

For here is no mere pomp of woe,
 No idle sorrow's vain parade ;
 What tears there be spontaneous flow ;—
 They mourn who mourning have displayed ;
 That boom of gun, that muffled knell,
 Are echoes of our hearts' farewell.

TO HIS MAJESTY KING GEORGE.

SIRE, while the heart of grief is not yet dumb
 For him we loved, how well can scarce be said ;
 While still the music of the muffled drum
 Rolls in the solemn requiem of the dead ;
 For you, on whom the instant duties lie
 Which were ordained of old for Kings to bear
 And may not pause for death—we lift our cry,
 " God keep you in His care ! "

It had to be that your first steps should fall
 Within the dreadful shadow thrown across
 The path you take at Destiny's high call,
 Lonely alway, and lonelier by your loss ;
 Yet if our prayers, where Hope and Memory meet,
 If loyal service laid before your throne,
 Can lend you comfort and confirm your feet,
 Then are you not alone.

Nay, there is set beside you, near and dear,
 Your Queen and ours, the gentle, brave and wise,
 Fit Consort by the claim we most revere—
 Her English love of home and homely ties ;
 And there is that Queen-Mother, who is fain
 Through bitter tears to bless your work begun ;
 To whom, though King and Emperor, you remain
 Just her beloved son.

Nor comes it strange to you, this realm of yours ;
 Your eyes have seen it, crowned with large increase,
 Have ranged the circuit of its seas and shores,
 Canopied by the covering wings of Peace ;
 Such is the gift he guarded close for you,
 Your royal Eather, such his fair bequest,
 Who saw the promise of his task come true,
 And so lay down to rest.

Yet may we pay for Peace too dear a price
 If, lapped in confidence and careless ease,
 We let the summoning need of sacrifice
 Find us with sinews soft and feeble knees ;
 Sire, it is yours to lift the nation's life
 Out of its languor ere it be too late,
 And make her win from Peace that nobler strife
 Which keeps a country great.

The ancient splendour falls upon your brow !
 Take up your heritage with both your hands !
 Call us to shake ourselves, betimes and now,
 Free of the snare of slumber's silken bands !
 See, we are true men still, a patriot breed ;
 Still to our storied name and same we cling ;
 Give but the sign, we follow where you lead,
 For God and for the King !